

# U A U C U



Student Research Exchange *Collected Papers 2016*





University of Aruba

UCU

UCU

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 Universiteit van Aruba hereby agree to this Memorandum of  
Understanding with the objective of promoting academic, research and cultural exchange  
exchange among their students. To achieve this end:

ARTICLE I

1. Each academic year during the term of this Memorandum of Understanding, up to 2  
full year students enrolled at Universiteit van Aruba may participate in a research  
degree basis. Students from UCU participating in the study program at U.A. for one full  
academic year will be counted as one (1) FTE. The enrollment of students from U.A.  
the terms of the Agreement may be for one semester, or for the full academic year.  
beginning with the fall term, of each institution's academic year. UCU will accept  
select a consistent number of students from semester to semester and will cooperate  
achieve the agreed upon exchange ratio, averaging over a three-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 exact  
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 and will cooperate  
following criteria: (a) academic excellence as reflected in their academic records.



UAUCU  
Student Research Exchange  
*Collected Papers 2016*



University of Aruba

**UCU**  
university college utrecht



**Universiteit Utrecht**

UAUCU  
Student Research Exchange  
*Collected Papers 2016*

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## Introduction to the second edition of the UAUCU Student Research Exchange Collected Papers

In this publication you will find papers and reflections that were written by thirteen participants in the UAUCU student research exchange project 2016, a project that offers students from University College Utrecht (UCU), University Utrecht (UU) and the University of Aruba (UA) the opportunity to conduct research in a multidisciplinary international student team. All students have submitted papers that reflect the diversity of approaches that the students have followed. The 2015 edition of this program has proven to be successful: three papers have led to international publications and two papers have resulted in thesis that received awards. We wish the same for the participants in the 2016 edition.

On the following pages you will find papers on language and culture, health care development, international relations and diplomacy, labor and productivity, organizational transitions and sustainability. While reading you will notice that the research was in different stages of completion at the time of publication of this book: for some of the participants, the field research is completed but data still need to be interpreted, for some the field research still has to start, and for some, the research and analysis have been completed. Some students are still struggling with the interpretation and presentation of their findings. Based upon this fieldwork the student will write their bachelor's or master's thesis. The research interests of the students are diverse but show a common interest in sustainable development and it is clear from the final products that the collaboration in the multidisciplinary team has influenced their approach to their research topics.

Every student has written a reflection on his or her experiences during the project that you will find in this

book. It is an interesting experience to read the reflections of the participants and to see how strong the collaboration and support has been among the students. These reflections tell you more about the core of this project: it is not only about doing research and about making student research meaningful; it is also about the realization that we can achieve more if we approach problems from several perspectives at the same time, and work together in teams that are multidisciplinary and as such complementary.

The papers in this volume are the product of peer to peer learning: the students in the research team have provided each other with feedback on content, method, style, language and structure. The papers have been published as they were submitted by the students; including the odd spelling mistake, grammatical error, raw opinion or hasty generalization.

Looking back at this second year of the project, one realizes how many people have been involved. It is impossible to name everybody; many people are crucial to the success of a project like this. For everybody who has been part of this project as (guest) lecturer, supervisor, manager, initiator, facilitator, student, interviewee, respondent, guide, coach or mentor: thank you very much for your support!

Eric Mijts & Jocelyn Ballantyne,  
Project coordinators UAUCU



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Anne Maamke Boonstra, University College Utrecht

## Dear reader,

First of all, I would like to say thank you for taking the time to read my personal introduction. As a reader this book to you will probably only look like a collection of research briefs, but to me this will read like a collection of memories. The UAUCU research program has offered me so much more than an opportunity to do research. I do not mean to get sentimental, as I am writing this before the project is even over, but I can say that apart from an amazing opportunity to do research the project has offered me friendships, chances to travel and explore and value life experience (for my life as a beginner adult).

My first Caribbean carnival experience was on St. Maarten eight years ago. It was hot and sweaty and the people around me were smothering me, but I was too busy to notice it. There were too many sounds, colours, people,

languages and I wanted to take it all in. Celebrating carnival was like stepping into a different world where everyone is happy. Looking back on my experience a few years later I appreciated the cultural importance of carnival and decided to write my thesis about the celebration.

Coming from University College Utrecht to Aruba was a big step. However, it was a great opportunity to do field research on the island during carnival. After a week of introduction activities we were thrown in the deep end. Scheduling our own interviews and driving our own cars, like the adults we are (ha!).

Being on Aruba has been an experience I could not have gotten anywhere else. The island offers unique social circumstances that create perfect research opportunities. I am delighted that the UAUCU field research program offers students from both Utrecht and Aruba a chance to pursue knowledge. Because the knowledge we have gained by participating in this program will guide us, not only to the completion of our bachelor degrees, but throughout the rest of our academic careers.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me throughout this research, which was also a personal journey. Thank you, Aruba.

# The Performance of Gender & Sexuality During Carnival on Aruba

by Anne Maamke Boonstra

Carnival is a celebration that cannot be missed when looking at Aruba's culture. The celebration takes over the island for at least a month every year. However, there are a lot of people for whom carnival lasts the entire year. People who design costumes, run carnival groups or make music are devoted to the celebration year round. For many people involved in the organisation of carnival it is something that they grew up with. It is something that is a part of them and that they love. A respondent said: "To be a carnavalista it has to be in your blood". This passion is certainly necessary for those organising carnival as the celebration in itself is non-profit. However, whether one is organising, participating or just standing on the side of the road you are participating in carnival as carnival celebrates culture and togetherness.

This research focuses on the communal aspect of carnival and the element of freedom that comes with the celebration. The dominating discourse is that carnival is a celebration during which everyone is equal and free to do what he or she wants. The research is based on this assumption that this essence of carnival creates a safe space in which everyone can participate. The research question has been narrowed down to "How do women and people of the LGBTQ community on Aruba experience and perform within this safe space?". To answer these questions in-depth interviews will be conducted with people who participate in different aspects of carnival on Aruba.

Literature on the performance of gender and sexuality, feminism and queer theory will be used to analyse the data collected (Butler, 1988). In this report only preliminary data will be discussed and analysed. To this end the report will include one important source that will also be used in the final research thesis, Carnival on Aruba by Victoria Razak (1997). However, as this is a report of preliminary findings the conclusions drawn are not conclusive and may differ from findings in the final research thesis.

This preliminary research report will begin with a few words about the researcher. This personal reflection will be followed by a short literature review and methodological outline. Next is collected data, which presents and analyses the preliminary data. Finally, the report closes with the conclusion.

## About the researcher

Because research is inevitably biased to a certain degree by the researcher I would like to include a few words about myself. These will touch on aspects of my personality that influence the way I conduct, view and discuss the following research. I am a heterosexual female with a mixed background. My father is Dutch and my mother Antillean, I am mixed race. I grew up in a middle class family and

have lived in the Netherlands for almost my entire life. For my bachelor degree I am enrolled at a small liberal arts & science college which has an international student base. However, most of my education at this college, as well as at my previous schools, has been based on Western theories and academics. The context in which this theory has been discussed has also been mainly Western.

## Literature Review

*Carnival in Aruba: History and Meaning in Aruba's Bacchanal* – Victoria M. Razak

Throughout these different celebrations of carnival a few themes have remained central. Razak describes carnival:

“In carnival part of the fun is behaving badly, letting go, giving in to one's egos and most outrageous fantasies. Protected by the license to freedom afforded by the time and place of carnival, behind our masks we can do what is normally frowned upon or forbidden.”(Razak, 1997, p. 106)

The points mentioned in this quote are similar to the themes connected to the Roman celebration mentioned above; changes in social hierarchy, revelling in abundance and giving in to one's desires knowing that you are protected by the anonymity of a masque or costume.

However, Razak resorts to more poetic language when trying to describe the “magic” of carnival; the proclaimed inevitability of change and the power of the celebration.

“Bodies are consumed with pulsating rhythms – nothing can stop the true carnavalista from jumping in at the tail. The quality of time and space suddenly changes as we enter into another dimension. We are not ourselves anymore, or perhaps we are complete?” (Razak, 1997, p.112).

Razak suggests that in the Caribbean these themes – carnival being in its own dimension, losing oneself in the celebration - are embraced because they alleviate the pressures that exist in diverse societies. She mentions the Trinidadian population facing difficulties regarding social classes, multiculturalism, etc. (Razak, 1997)

Razak also writes about the beginning of carnival on Aruba. She quotes a source from the National Library, which states that carnival can be traced back to 1939 (Razak, 1997). It was at this time that the oil refinery attracted people from the other Caribbean islands to come work on the island. This included people from Trinidad who brought the tradition of carnival with them. This resulted in a group of Trinidadians parading in the neighbourhood Lago Heights as early as

1944. That same year Tivoi, an elite social group, also celebrated carnival in private (Razak, 1997).

In the Americas the central figure of the carnival is the carnival queen this also goes for Aruba. Regarding the queen elections Razak states that “the carnival celebration is decidedly conservative, and Aruba's celebrations conform to this ambiance of restraint.” (Razak, 1997). Aruba's first public carnival queen was elected in 1955 and started a tradition that still continues today.

Razak describes modern carnival as a celebration that forces inspection and reinvention of the self. As everything is exaggerated for entertainment and performance not only the individual, but also the nation is scrutinized. Carnival is celebrated within the context of the island. Social and political issues are extorted during the festival as people are free to critique and ridicule those that usually fulfill powerful positions, but are merely carnavalistas during the carnival month (Razak, 1997).

However, there are also aspects of the celebration that

prevent people from joining completely. One of these aspects is the financial side of carnival. Costumes, being a member of a group and music is often very expensive. This prevents many people from joining or causes them to incur serious debts. The expense of carnival is making the feast less accessible to the Aruban population and more of a celebration that is only financially accessible for the middle and upper classes (Razak, 1997).

## **Methodological model**

As methodological model the “case study” model has been chosen. Specifically the “critical case”:

“Here the researcher has a well-developed theory, and a case is chosen on the grounds that it will allow a better understanding of the circumstances in which the hypothesis will and will not hold up” (Bryman, 2012, p. 70).

This specific model has been chosen as being the most suitable for the following reasons:

The research wishes to elucidate the celebration of carnival on Aruba, instead of providing a generalisation about the celebration of carnival around the world. The case study model allows me to take the idiographic approach.

There is sufficient theory about carnival and the unique atmosphere that exists during the celebration of carnival to make a single case study about carnival on Aruba. It will be a valuable addition to the material that already exists.

The concept of a case study will permit the creation of a broad context that includes ideas from different disciplines. To fully grasp carnival on Aruba these different disciplines are necessary to prove or disprove the hypothesis based on a better understanding of the celebration.

Using a case study design allows for the use of different methods, which will enable the research to capture the full complexity of the celebration and properly observe carnival as a whole.

## **Methods**

### *Interview Style*

For the interviews the semi-structured interviewing style will be used. The semi-structured style is most appropriate and efficient for this research because, below a few reasons are listed:

During the interviews the interviewer will try to pinpoint emotions and values that are specific, but difficult to describe. It is also very possible that an interviewee will use a different terminology or share an unexpected, but related experience. A semi-structured interview will provide the possibility to engage more directly and acquire the specific results that are desired (Bryman, 2012).

The topic of carnival on Aruba is expected to be one people want to talk about, but are also personally invested in. A semi-structured interview will make the situation more casual and will encourage people to share their experiences.

Most of the interviewees will only have time for one interview. As follow-up interviews will be difficult to obtain it is best to have more freedom during the interview in case unexpected, but relevant, examples come up. These will invite follow up questions that will allow me to explore new insights into carnival.

### *Interviewees*

The research looks at the change in social hierarchy that takes place during the celebration of carnival. Therefore,



the interviewer will talk to the people that create this new, temporary, hierarchy and the ones that find their roles within it. This hierarchy is being created by music, the election of kings and queens, costumes based on certain themes, etc. These different variables are regulated and created months in advance by local communities, government organisations, carnival groups, etc.

The people in the boards of these organisations can give insight into the creation of the carnival atmosphere. During the interviews the respondents will be asked about their experiences and their opinions about the value of carnival.

On the other side are the people whom this hierarchy is being imposed on. Two groups that fulfil important roles during the carnival are chosen, Aruba's LGBTQ community and women in general. People from these social categories can be found in specific roles during the carnival, during interviews they will be asked about their role (or perceived role) in the celebration of carnival on Aruba. Specifically, the interview will focus on the sense of "freedom" that is quintessential to carnival and if they can relate to this.

## **Collected data**

Preliminary data that have been collected have shown the following regarding the positions of women and members of the LGBTQ community during carnival on Aruba.

### ***Women***

The preliminary findings show little about the position of women during carnival outside of the position of carnival queen. Therefore, as the queen has a prominent position not only in the celebration of carnival on Aruba, but also as a part of the switch in social hierarchy which is essential to the celebration of carnival, the focus will be on the queens.

The first point of attention is the position of carnival queen in itself. During the interviews a few factors arose as to why such a high value is being ascribed to the position of carnival queen. Firstly, the election of a carnival queen is one of the oldest carnival traditions on Aruba. The fact that it is a recurring event creates both historical value and sentimental value among Arubans. Secondly, carnival is a folkloric tradition and as such the queen is a queen of the people. Being elected by the people is an immense honour. While on the actual election night not the Arubans, but tourists choose which contestant wins, every carnival group brings forward their own queen. Every social group, whether it is based on class or neighbourhood, is represented. The lady who has been elected as queen will be recognized as a queen for the rest of her life, even if she goes on to have an international career Arubans will know her as their queen. Thirdly, the carnival queen election, like most events during carnival, is a celebration of beauty. The celebration of young female beauty is in line with Razak's description of carnival when she said that it was a celebration of abundance. Finally, as one respondent said "everyone on Aruba loves pageants".

The preliminary data show that the carnival queen plays a valued and important role in the celebration of carnival on Aruba. As such the role enjoys high public esteem, girls grow up wanting to be carnival queen. However, one respondent said that the image of the carnival queen is not strictly hierarchical and more of Aruba's sweetheart. Again, this ties in with Razak's description of the carnival queen representing the "perfect" woman who is cheerful, but also modest (1997).

The second point of attention regarding the carnival queen is the way in which the position is taken on. The first inkling of what kind of queen a lady will be is based on the contestant's theme. Every contestant creates a show, which she will perform on the eve of the competition, based on a certain theme. These themes can be anything ranging from historical events to ecological values. The theme will always

hold historical or social value to the community. The theme like the queen's performance is geared towards stimulating a sense of community and joy.

Once a lady is elected as queen the duties that come with the role are hers to perform. Being the carnival queen is truly a performance, a certain manner of conduct is expected from her. A queen must not only be beautiful, but also kind, joyful and encouraging. During the carnival period, the queen is present at most events such as parades and the burning of King Momo, the traditional ending of the carnival period. However, after the carnival period the queen is still expected to attend certain events such as openings or social gatherings at schools, elderly homes, etc. While performing the role of queen it is very important to encourage a positive atmosphere. A queen will always smile and support positive interaction by speaking about the beauty of Aruba and importance of the good-naturedness of its community.

The third and final point of attention is the person who is elected to be queen. One can look at women in carnival through a feminist lens, but when looking at social situations other factors must be taken into account. One of these factors is social class. Over the years celebrating carnival has become increasingly expensive and the variety of price ranges for costumes have become limited. Carnival on Aruba has become luxurious and the cost to participate in a parade begins at 500 AWG. As a social club presents a queen she does not pay for her own stylist or designer. However, she does need to belong to a carnival group. These groups differ. Some are older, some less expensive again others less exclusive. It follows naturally that some clubs can afford more than others and though this does not make a queen, it is a factor that should be taken into account (Razak, 1997). Social class influences how a queen is prepared and presented and also who supports her. To mitigate these influences from the community are why, on the evening of the competition, tourists who have not been

on the island for longer than 24 hours elect the carnival queen.

In addition to social class there is also the topic of race. The influence of race during the carnival queen election is something that will be included in the final thesis.

### ***LGBTQ Community***

The LGBTQ community has long been involved in the creation and celebration of carnival on Aruba. However, in recent years their presence within the celebration has become more accepted and prominent. In the interviews conducted for this research it became clear that there are two aspects to the LGBTQ community's role in the carnival: the roles they play behind the scenes and the ones they perform during the parades.

Firstly, regarding the behind the scenes aspect; many members of the LGBTQ community are involved in the creation of carnival. They prepare queen contestants or design and make costumes. Some people work a whole year to prepare for carnival, just for that one month. Members of the LGBTQ community are often involved and highly requested when it comes to designing and preparing. They are considered to be creative and skilled in these particular areas and they play their part to live up to those expectations. However, after the carnival period is over some find it difficult to find work, especially transgendered people. On Aruba there are still a lot of taboos around homosexuality and even more so around transgendered people. One interviewee shared a story about a friend being offered a job only to be told that she was not welcome once the company found out she is transgender. She now has found a job with a friend and was forced to rely on her connections rather than her skills to obtain work. It seems that during the carnival period members of the LGBTQ community are accepted, but outside of this period they experience social difficulties. The risks that comes with

these social stigmas, potential unemployment and financial issues, are keeping people from making choices that would benefit their personal lives. The interviews brought forward that not only troubles regarding employment have to be taken into account, also legal matters. A large obstacle for transgendered people on Aruba is the fact that it is not possible for someone to change their status to the gender they ascribe to. These social stigmas contribute to the fact that these issues are perpetuated.

Secondly, the performances during the parade. It is not quite normal for the carnival parades to feature men in drag. It is a widely accepted and appreciated costume, which possibly finds its origins with the jamenttes from Trinidad (Noel, 2010). However, that does not mean that drag is commonly accepted on Aruba. Taken out of the context of carnival a drag queen would not be able to go unnoticed on Aruba. The interviews suggest that the change in attitude regarding drag has to do with the way it is viewed. If someone dresses up like a woman for the parade it is a performance, carnival is a show. However, when people are confronted with a man dressed in drag outside of the carnival season it has crossed the line between show and reality. They are witnessing what is considered a performance associated with the carnival season in their everyday life and the two do not combine.

This year's carnival season has been the first season during which the rainbow carnival queen election took place. The rainbow carnival queen is a transgender queen who is chosen through the same process as the traditional carnival queen. This election was a big step for the LGBTQ community on Aruba, as people have not always been as accepting of people from that community being in the carnival parade. One interviewee described how unsupported she felt being in the parade as Miss Gay Aruba several years ago and said that 10 years ago she could not have imagined the rainbow carnival queen participating in the parade. The difference between the public's reaction to seeing Miss Gay Aruba in the parade several years ago and seeing the rainbow carnival

queen participate this year was the difference of acceptance. The public accepting one person in a parade of hundreds may seem like a small step, but it is a big one for Aruba's LGBTQ community. The interviews brought forward that being accepted in carnival parade is very important, as people on Aruba are very protective of their carnival. Being accepted in their parade is a step towards being accepted in every day life. As mentioned before it took a few years for people to accept transgender performers in the parade, perhaps after this acceptance it will only take a few years for the taboos outside of the carnival period to be lessened.

The response during the interviews was positive about the community's future involvement in carnival. When asked about imaginations regarding/for the future one interviewee replied: "[I imagine] bigger things: having the rainbow queen election as huge as the regular carnival queen election [...] This competition allows us to have more fantasies and present more elaborate things." As mentioned by Razak the carnival queen elections are quite traditional, there is a certain set of rules that are rarely broken. In the interviews the desire to do bigger more extravagant things during the rainbow carnival queen show was expressed (Razak, 1997).

Finally, the interviews also introduced an aspect that was reminiscent of the "regular" carnival queen. Like the carnival queen the rainbow carnival queen's role is to serve the community. It seems that this traditional aspect of the queen role remains an integral part of performing the position. A queen, no matter what gender, is there to support her people and to make them happy. However, the support of the rainbow carnival queen is aimed towards the LGBTQ community. The rainbow carnival queen of the 62nd carnival has a special connection with the LGBTQ youth organisation of Aruba and is considered a spokesperson for the LGBTQ community within her role. Her goal is to gain the acceptance of the Aruban community not only during, but also outside of the carnival period. Some

might find the labels that are used when speaking about gender and sexuality to be a part of the problem. However, the interviewee said indicated that she thinks they are a necessary evil and is comfortable with them because she is comfortable with who she is. Yet, her ultimate goal is to let go of labels and for members of the LGBTQ community to be accepted as human beings.

## **Conclusion**

This report has been an analysis of the preliminary data of the research thesis 'Performance of Gender and Sexuality During Carnival on Aruba'. It has discussed several aspects of female performance as well as the performance of members of the QQ community on Aruba. Due to limited data available at this time this report has been mainly about carnival queens and transgender people. Nevertheless, the analysis has brought forward some points of interest.

The first issue that was discussed is the social value of the role of the carnival queen and how it has gained this value. The value seems to not only come from the fact that the queen election is one of the oldest traditions of the Aruban carnival. The importance of the position is also due to the fact that the carnival queen is a queen chosen by the people; she is Aruba's sweetheart and it is the role Aruban girls dream of fulfilling. The people create the role of carnival queen and it is her duty to be a positive force of festivity. An additional point of interest is how the role of carnival queen is performed and by whom. As Razak said being carnival queen is a conventional role (1997). The final thesis will look more critically at aspects such as race and social class.

The value of the role of queen is not limited to the carnival queen. The position of rainbow queen is also valuable as it is a step for Arubans towards accepting the LGBTQ community. People from the LGBTQ community have been contributing to the carnival for years. However, the

interviews show that they do not have the same possibilities outside of the show that is carnival. Additionally, the rainbow queen is also important in the role she performs outside of the carnival. Being a spokesperson for the LGBTQ youth community is a position that is very influential to Aruba's next generation.

Because the role of rainbow queen has been introduced this year. The role of rainbow carnival queen allows for a lot more creativity than the role of carnival queen. However, as the data show, people from the LGBTQ community are experiencing less freedom in their day-to-day lives. Aruba outside of the carnival season still holds a lot of taboos regarding gender and sexuality. Possibly, the LGBTQ community being formally accepted as a part of Aruba's carnival will lessen these taboos.

These findings are based on a preliminary analysis of the data collected through interviews. Hopefully, the final research will confirm and add to these results.

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Maja Vasić, University of Utrecht

## This wonderful adventure consisted of 4 very important aspects for me:

Aruba – one happy island! And Aruba truly is one happy island. I was amazed by everything that Aruba has to offer. Besides the white sand and the beautiful beaches, Aruba is even more known for its 2020 vision. With this vision Aruba wants to become 100% sustainable by 2020. Thanks to the UAUCU//UU project I learned a lot about this vision. During the introduction week, we visited different companies which explained how important this is for Aruba and how this can be achieved. We also saw the solar park and the windmill park, which are one of the first big projects towards accomplishing the goal.

Language and culture – my biggest love. I think this was one of the most important reasons why I chose to come to Aruba. This was my opportunity to learn not one but

two new languages, namely Papiamentu and Spanish. In addition, Aruba helped me gain insights into benefits and perks of societies, such as multilingual and multicultural societies. Speaking more than two languages and a mix of cultures can have impact on a lot of different things, but most certainly the education, which was my area of research. It was interesting to examine the preferred language of education and the reasons why the native language of the majority of the population is not one of the instruction languages in the higher education.

Future – being part of this project helped me think about my future plans. I actually always wanted to do a PhD. Thanks to this project, I now had the opportunity to publish a paper, which may be the first step towards finding a PhD. Also, due to my research topic, I spent the majority of my time at the University of Aruba, where I had the chance to work with students and teachers. This made me think about my future job opportunities and now I know that I would actually love to become part of the educational world, where I can experience the joy of making a difference and stay a lifelong learner.

Growing up – probably the hardest part for me. This is the first time for me to live ‘on my own’. I remember saying goodbye to my sister and my mother, which hurt the most. I thought that I would not have dinner with my family every night and that I had to do everything on my own. Luckily, I was wrong. Thanks to 5 amazing girls, I had the best brunches, dinners and barbecues. Living with them in the big ‘Barbie house’ truly taught me how to become a real grown up. I learned a lot about myself and I cannot thank them enough for teaching me and being there for me.

Thank you Eric Mijts and Jocelyn Ballantyne for organising this amazing project, for teaching us and for being there for us during this incredible journey!

# The preferred language of instruction in the higher education in Aruba: attitudinal, situational and motivational aspects

Maja Vasić

## Introduction

In 2010, the government of Aruba conducted a census. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) found that the majority of the Aruban population (69%) speak Papiamentu at home. Papiamentu was followed by Spanish (14%), English (7%), and Dutch (6%). Dutch is one of the official languages of Aruba, and until 2003 it was the only official language. However, Dutch is still one of the least frequently spoken languages at home. A possible explanation for this might be that Papiamentu is being adopted as a colloquial language (Beheydt, 2008).

Beheydt (2008) analysed language and language policies in Aruba and found that Papiamentu is developing its status as an official Aruban language. The results also showed that Dutch is not the only language of instruction anymore. Primary schools are slowly adopting Papiamentu as a main language of instruction. However, according to Beheydt (2008), Aruba should not choose Papiamentu as the only language of instruction, because it could lose its status of a multilingual society. Therefore, Beheydt (2008) recommended to adopt Papiamentu as a language of instruction in primary schools in combination with one other foreign language. This should stimulate students to be bilingual or even multilingual.

This current research will focus on the language of instruction in higher education. In addition, the majority

of the students in the higher education are in the final stage of their education, which may influence their preference for a certain language of education due to the future plans. Aruban students will be asked about their choice of preference for a certain language of instruction. The findings of the current research will be used to put forward recommendations regarding the language of instruction in the higher education in Aruba.

## Literature review

### **Attitude towards Dutch, English, Papiamentu and Spanish**

Several studies have been conducted to measure the attitude of the Aruban population towards the four most spoken languages (Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish) in Aruba. For instance, Leuverink (2011) measured the attitude of the Aruban population towards Dutch, Papiamentu, Spanish and English, and towards the language policy. Leuverink (2011) found that the Aruban population is less positive about Dutch compared to the other three languages. In addition, Leuverink (2011) found that Papiamentu is a very important language for the Aruban population.

Other studies also showed that Papiamentu plays an important role in Aruban society. Kester and Fun (2012) discovered that Papiamentu is crucial for living in Aruba, according to Aruban students who live in the



Netherlands. A reason for this may be that Papiamentu is the native language of the majority of the population and is consequently often used in all kinds of situations. Furthermore, Kester and Fun (2012) found that besides Papiamentu and Dutch, Aruban students are positive about English and Spanish as well. This was also found by Kester and van der Linde (2015), who measured attitudes towards Dutch among high school students in Aruba. The findings showed that Papiamentu was often used as a language for communication by students (Kester & Van der Linde, 2015). Apart from Papiamentu, English was also favoured both as a language for communication and a language of instruction (Kester & Van der Linde, 2015).

### **Language of instruction**

Language of instruction has been a focus of several studies. For instance, Leuverink (2011) researched the preferred language of instruction among the Aruban population. The findings showed that the Aruban population considers education in the native language to be very important. The respondents also indicated that it is good that Papiamentu is being used in different classes and courses (Leuverink, 2011). However, Dutch was found to be the most favoured language of instruction (Leuverink, 2011). These findings correspond with findings of Kester and Van der Linde (2015). Kester and Van der Linde (2015) measured the attitude of high school students towards Dutch and Papiamentu as a language of instruction. Their findings showed that both Dutch and Papiamentu score very high. According to Kester and Van der Linde (2015), these findings are related to future plans, namely “studies at home vs. studies abroad, local vs. international job market etc.” (p. 8).

### **Motivation to learn a new language**

As mentioned earlier, future plans can influence a preference for a different language as a language of instruction. This is closely related to the motivation for language learning. Wimolmas (2013) studied the motivation of students in English language learning and found that motivation can

play a major role in the process of learning the language. Wimolmas (2013) defined motivation as: “the extent one strives to acquire the language because of the desire to do so and the satisfaction derived from it” (Wimolmas, 2013, p. 904). The determination to acquire a new language may be derived from diverse motivational aspects. These motivational aspects may influence someone’s preference for the instruction language. Therefore, it is important to examine the different motivational aspects that are playing a role in learning one or more of the four most spoken languages in Aruba.

In his article, Wimolmas (2013) described two types of motivation, namely integrative and instrumental motivation (as in Krashen, 1988, p. 22).

1. *The integrative motivation is defined as “the desire to be part of recognized or important members of the community or that society that speak the second language. It is based on interest in learning the second language because of their need to learn about, associate or socialize with the people who use it or because of purpose or intention to participate or integrate in the second language in that community; but sometimes it involves emotion or affective factors a great deal” (Wimolmas, 2013 as in Saville-Troike, 2006, p.86).*
2. *The instrumental motivation is defined as “the concepts of purely practical value in learning the second language in order to increase learners’ careers or business opportunities, giving them more prestige and power, accessing scientific and technical information, or just passing a course of their study in school” (Wimolmas, 2013 as in Saville-Troike, 2006, p.86).*

### **Research question**

The possibility of adopting Papiamentu as one of the languages of instruction in higher education has not been researched yet. Consequently, this current study will focus on the preferred language of instruction of Aruban students in higher education. Therefore, the following research question has been formulated:



*Which language(s) are preferred by the Aruban students as the language of instruction in higher education?*

To answer the research question, this research will focus on three previously described aspects: attitudes towards different languages, different situations in which different languages are used and motivation to learn different languages. Previous studies have shown that these aspects may play a significant role in making a choice for the most preferable language of instruction. Consequently, three additional sub-questions will be examined:

- What attitude do Aruban students have towards the four different languages (Dutch, Papiamentu, English and Spanish)?
- In which situations do Aruban students use different languages?
- What have been the motivational aspects to learn the languages the Aruban students are proficient in?

## **Method**

To examine the most preferable language of instruction in the higher education, an online survey was conducted. The survey was distributed to students of the University of Aruba and Instituto Pedagógico Arubano (educational institute for teachers, henceforth IPA). The survey started with a short introductory text, informing respondents about the purpose of the survey without revealing too much information about the actual research questions.

Afterwards, focus groups were organized in order to discuss the results of the survey with students and teachers. This approach makes this research a quantitative study using mixed methods (Dörnyei, 2007).

### **Pilot study**

The survey was firstly taken by a small pilot group. In total, eight respondents filled in the survey. The percentage of women was 62.5% (total 5) and 37.5% were male (total 3). Seven respondents were students at the University of Aruba and one respondent was a teacher at the same university.

The age ranged from 21 to 44 with a mean of 26.25. On average, it took 15 minutes for the respondents to fill in the survey.

The respondents were asked to fill in the survey, comment on it and make suggestions about the questions. The majority stated that the survey was interesting and served the purpose. However, there were minor improvements to be made. For instance, two questions were rephrased because these questions were ambiguously formulated. In addition, four questions were deleted because they were not relevant. The possibility to give multiple answers was enabled for two questions. For example, respondents were often bilingually raised. In this case, it is important that they can indicate their native languages. Lastly, for two questions a N/A column was added. For instance, one of the respondents indicated she does not have siblings, so the question in which language she communicates with her siblings does not apply to her.

### **Instruments**

For the collection of the data, the online survey contained scales to measure each variable of the earlier presented research question.

The measurements for the variable attitude towards the four most spoken languages in Aruba were adopted from the scale of Leuverink (2011). To measure the attitude towards the four languages, the variable Attitude was divided in three categories: Language, Cultural identity and General attitude. Some sample items are: “It is necessary to speak more than one language in Aruba”, “The following languages represent the Aruban identity the best” and “Having courses in the following languages would protect and preserve these languages”.

**\* Having courses in the following languages would protect and preserve these languages**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Papiamentu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 1 Example question General attitude

To research the situations in which people use different languages, two categories were formed, namely Conversation partners and Situations in which different languages are used. The items used to measure this aspect were adopted from Faraclas, Kester and Mijts, (2013) and adapted for the purposes of this research. To measure which language is used most often with different conversation partners, the following question was asked: “Which language(s) do you use every day when you talk to: your mother, your father, your siblings, your friends, your partner, your fellow

students, your teachers, your colleagues at work, your colleagues outside work and Other.” The respondents were given the chance to choose: English, Dutch, Papiamentu, Spanish, Other and Not Applicable. Multiple answers were possible. To measure which languages are used the most in different situations six five-point Likert scales anchored by “never” – “always” for all four languages were used. A sample item was the following: “When I read a book, I read in...”.

**\* When I read a book, I read in**  
*N/A - not applicable*

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	N/A
Papiamentu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dutch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 2 Example question Situation

The next variable was Motivation, which was divided in two categories, namely Integrative and Instrumental motivation. Two sample items are: “Learning the following languages enables me to better understand and appreciate the way of life in Aruba” and “Being proficient in the following languages will increase my career or business opportunities”.

The last variable was Preference, which was measured with four five-point Likert scales anchored by “strongly disagree” – “strongly agree” for all four languages. A sample item was the following: “The following languages are my most preferable languages of instruction”.

For all variables Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was calculated. These can be found in the table below.

*Table 1. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for all variables*

Language	.72
Cultural identity	.66
General attitude	.81
Situations	.69
Integrative motivation	.86
Instrumental motivation	.84
Preference	.71

After filling in their answers on the Likert scales, the respondents were asked to fill in some biographical data including their gender, age and educational level. All participants were thanked for their cooperation.

### **Procedure and respondents**

The online survey was conducted at the University of Aruba and IPA in Aruba. The University of Aruba has approximately 600 students. All students and teachers were provided with a link to the online survey. IPA has approximately 300 students. In total, 157 students from IPA received the link to the online survey. They were asked to fill in the questions. The survey was online from the 3rd of March until the 16nd of March.

In total, 210 respondents completed the online survey,

from which 178 are valid. The percentage of women was 66.2% (total 139) and 18.6% were male (total 39). The age ranged from 17 to 59 with a mean of 26.6. The majority of the respondents were students. In total, 20 teachers filled in the survey. The majority of the students study law.

### **Focus groups**

The majority of the data was collected by means of the online survey. In addition to the online survey, two focus groups were organized with students who filled in the survey. The first focus group was held on March 14th 2016 at IPA in San Nicolas, Aruba. In total, four students participated in this focus group. All participants were women enrolled in teacher training education. This focus group will be referred to as Focus group IPA. The second focus group was held on March 31st 2016 at the University of Aruba in Oranjestad, Aruba. In total, four students participated during this conversation. All four students were students of Law, three men and one woman. This focus group will be referred to as Focus group UA.

The students were asked to participate in the focus groups to discuss the results of the survey. All participants were asked for their approval to record the conversations. The recordings of the conversation were not transcribed, because the focus groups served as a complementary to the survey. The recordings are available upon request. On average, the recordings are 41 minutes long. Both focus groups were held in Dutch. All statements used for this research were own translations.

### **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis of the data was conducted using SPSS. The tests that were conducted are the Bivariate Pearson Correlation test and multiple response analysis.

### **Results**

In the following, the results of the statistical analysis will be described. This section will give an overview of all variables across all four most spoken languages in Aruba

(Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish). It will also include various statements given during focus groups by students who filled in the survey.

### Overview of all variables and languages

This overview will make it possible to see all items used to measure the attitude towards languages spoken in Aruba, to examine which languages are used in various situations and to examine different motivational aspects

to learn languages spoken in Aruba. These three aspects are important to measure which language is preferred as a language of instruction in the higher education in Aruba.

### Attitude

In the following paragraph, the variables Language, Cultural identity and General attitude will be presented. These variables were used to measure the attitude of the Aruban students towards the four most spoken languages in Aruba.

*Table 2. Means and percentages of items used to measure attitude towards languages spoken in Aruba and multilingualism (N = 210) (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	N	M
It is necessary to speak more than one language in Aruba	0.48% n = 1	0.95% n = 2	2.38% n = 5	31.90% n = 67	64.29% n = 135	210	4.59
I find it natural to hear different languages in my surroundings	0.95% n = 2	0.48% n = 1	3.81% n = 8	39.52% n = 83	55.24% n = 116	210	4.48
It is not difficult to speak two languages	0.95% n = 2	3.33% n = 7	2.38% n = 5	43.33% n = 91	50.00% n = 105	210	4.38
People have a better opportunity to find a good job if they speak more than one language	0.48% n = 1	0.00% n = 0	4.29% n = 9	27.14% n = 57	68.10% n = 143	210	4.62

Table 2 shows that the means of the variables are relatively high in general. The findings show that the attitude towards the languages spoken in Aruba is very positive. However, during the focus groups, students indicated that a multilingual society such as Aruba can have both advantages and disadvantages. One participant indicated that he is proud to know all four most spoken languages in Aruba, but that his language skills in all of those languages could be better. He referred to a friend who spoke Chinese

at home, but could also speak Dutch and English very well. The participant concluded that having a good language competence in one language can really help to learn other languages better. Other participants of the conversation agreed with him, adding that they often switch between different languages because they cannot express themselves very well in only one language since their vocabulary or knowledge of grammar is limited (Focus group UA, 2016).

*Table 3. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to measure Cultural identity (N = 199) (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).*

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish
You do not need to know other languages if you speak the following languages in Aruba	M 2.66 SD 1.42	M 2.70 SD 1.22	M 3.16 SD 1.31	M 2.50 SD 1.22
You miss a part of the Aruban identity if you do not speak the following languages	M 4.53 SD .74	M 3.47 SD 1.02	M 3.27 SD .98	M 2.78 SD 1.03
The following languages represent the Aruban identity the best	M 4.77 SD .42	M 3.52 SD 1.04	M 3.33 SD 1.03	M 2.86 SD 1.05
I would have preferred to grow up with the following languages	M 4.19 SD 1.02	M 4.06 SD 1.00	M 4.09 SD .94	M 3.47 SD 1.23

Table 3 shows that Papiamento scored the highest out of all four languages for the majority of the items. The findings showed that Papiamento is seen as an Aruban language. This is also in line with findings of the focus groups where one participant indicated that: “Papiamento is Aruba and Aruba is Papiamento. That is the feeling you get, I think. Language is very important for a population. Something unique.” (Focus group IPA, 2016). According to the participants, Papiamento represents Aruba better than Dutch though both languages are official Aruban languages. The reason

for this is that Papiamento is spoken by most inhabitants, whereas Dutch is spoken by a significantly smaller group of inhabitants (Focus group UA, 2016).

However, findings also showed that Papiamento cannot replace other languages. Respondents indicated that other languages besides Papiamento are required when communicating with different speaking partners. During the focus groups, participants indicated that languages such as English and Spanish are crucial when speaking to tourists and housemaids (Focus group IPA, 2016).

*Table 4. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to measure General attitude (N = 191). (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish
Most preferably I speak	M 4.60 SD .61	M 3.41 SD .1.12	M 4.10 SD .90	M 2.82 SD 1.20
The following languages sound most attractive (sound nice)	M 4.13 SD .92	M 3.34 SD 1.10	M 4.30 SD .75	M 3.49 SD 1.20
Having courses in the following languages develops better thinking skills	M 3.84 SD 1.09	M 4.01 SD .99	M 4.28 SD .92	M 3.32 SD .1.09
Having courses in the following languages would improve the status of these languages	M 4.19 SD .96	M 3.99 SD .96	M 4.07 SD .92	M 3.70 SD 1.06
Having courses in the following languages would protect and preserve these languages	M 4.45 SD .84	M 3.88 SD .93	M 3.76 SD .99	M 3.52 SD 1.02

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents prefer to speak Papiamento ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = .61$ ). In addition, results showed that having courses in Papiamento would improve the status of the language and help to protect and preserve Papiamento. The language that scored the lowest is Spanish ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ). It is the only language that is not located on the higher half of the Likert scales.

It is interesting that having courses in English and Dutch is thought to develop better thinking skills, given that the majority of the respondents do not have one of these two languages as their native language. Participants of the focus groups clarified this by saying that Dutch and English play a major role in the educational system. Consequently, thinking skills are already better developed in Dutch and

English than in Papiamento. For this reason, students sometimes unwillingly use Dutch or English to avoid translating to or from Papiamento. In addition, participants pointed out that Papiamento is not developed enough to be used as a language of instruction. The participants indicated that Arubans sometimes say sentences in Papiamento and do not hear that it is not correct (Focus group IPA, 2016).

### Situations

To examine in which situations the Aruban students use different languages two variables were used. The first variable was used to investigate which languages are used in conversations with different speaking partners. This is presented in Table 5.

*Table 5. Percentages and original numbers of the items used to examine which languages are used in conversations with different speaking partners (N = 190).  
The following question was asked: Which language(s) do you use every day when you talk to*

Speaking partners	English	Dutch	Papiamento	Spanish	Other	N/A	Total
Your mother	14.74% n = 28	16.84% n = 32	76.32% n = 145	16.32% n = 31	5.26% n = 10	1.58% n = 3	190
Your father	15.26% n = 29	15.79% n = 20	72.63% n = 138	8.95% n = 17	5.26% n = 10	6.84% n = 13	190
Your siblings	25.26% n = 48	19.47% n = 37	79.47% n = 151	10.00% n = 19	3.68% n = 7	8.42% n = 16	190
Your friends	51.05% n = 97	32.11% n = 61	93.16% n = 177	23.68% n = 45	3.16% n = 6	0.00% n = 0	190
Your partner	21.58% n = 41	10.53% n = 20	66.32% n = 126	10.00% n = 19	1.58% n = 3	23.68% n = 45	190
Your fellow students	50.00% n = 95	43.68% n = 83	91.05% n = 173	13.16% n = 25	1.05% n = 2	1.05% n = 2	190
Your teachers	58.95% n = 112	70.53% n = 134	70.53% n = 134	6.32% n = 12	0.53% n = 1	1.58% n = 3	190
Your colleagues at work	34.73% n = 66	34.74% n = 66	76.84% n = 146	13.16% n = 25	1.58% n = 3	20.53% n = 39	190
Your colleagues outside work	30.53% n = 58	23.68% n = 45	78.95% n = 150	10.00% n = 19	1.05% n = 2	19.47% n = 37	190

As shown in Table 5, the percentages for the use of Papiamento are very high for all speaking partners. It is striking to see that the percentages for Dutch were only high for conversations held with teachers. Respondents were also able to choose the option “Other” to fill in which other languages are used with these speaking

partners. Languages mentioned were: German, French, Japanese, Portuguese, Cantonese, Sranan Tongo, Chinese and Haitian Kreyol.

The following table (Table 6) gives an overview of different situations to examine in which situations different languages are used in Aruba.

*Table 6. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to examine which languages are used in different situations (N = 187). (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish
When I read a book, I read in	<i>M</i> 2.02 <i>SD</i> 1.06	<i>M</i> 3.26 <i>SD</i> 1.30	<i>M</i> 3.98 <i>SD</i> 1.17	<i>M</i> 1.82 <i>SD</i> 1.18
When I read a magazine, I read in	<i>M</i> 2.67 <i>SD</i> 1.29	<i>M</i> 2.25 <i>SD</i> 1.37	<i>M</i> 4.03 <i>SD</i> 1.14	<i>M</i> 1.90 <i>SD</i> 1.28
When I watch TV, I watch programmes in	<i>M</i> 2.68 <i>SD</i> 1.16	<i>M</i> 2.35 <i>SD</i> 1.17	<i>M</i> 4.55 <i>SD</i> .82	<i>M</i> 2.45 <i>SD</i> 1.40
When I listen to the radio, I listen to programmes in	<i>M</i> 3.94 <i>SD</i> 1.22	<i>M</i> 1.97 <i>SD</i> 1.22	<i>M</i> 2.73 <i>SD</i> 1.50	<i>M</i> 1.79 <i>SD</i> 1.23
When I write posts on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter...), I write in	<i>M</i> 3.35 <i>SD</i> 1.34	<i>M</i> 1.82 <i>SD</i> 1.14	<i>M</i> 3.94 <i>SD</i> 1.22	<i>M</i> 1.68 <i>SD</i> 1.17
When I read my course material, I read in	<i>M</i> 1.70 <i>SD</i> 1.11	<i>M</i> 3.72 <i>SD</i> 1.50	<i>M</i> 3.86 <i>SD</i> 1.30	<i>M</i> 1.26 <i>SD</i> .71

Table 6 illustrates the use of different languages in various situations. The results showed that English is used most often in different situations. On the one hand, when reading books ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ) and magazines ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ), and watching TV programmes ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = .82$ ) English scored the highest. On the other hand, radio was mostly listened to in Papiamento ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ). These findings were discussed during the focus groups. Participants indicated that English is used more often because more material is offered in English. It was also added that Dutch plays a major role as well, because it is the language of instruction. Participants explained that

“it is a habit to read in Dutch from a young age” (Focus group IPA, 2016). The reason for this is that most of the books are written in Dutch. Even Aruban writers often published in Dutch because this makes it possible to reach a bigger audience. (Focus group IPA, 2016).” Some of the participants indicated that they had never seen a book in Papiamento when they were young (Focus group IPA, 2016).

### **Motivation**

In the following section two variables will be presented, namely instrumental and integrative motivation.

*Table 7. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to examine Integrative motivation (N = 184). (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish
Learning the following languages is important for making me knowledgeable and a skilful person	<i>M</i> 4.44 <i>SD</i> 1.80	<i>M</i> 5.15 <i>SD</i> 1.69	<i>M</i> 5.66 <i>SD</i> 1.60	<i>M</i> 4.26 <i>SD</i> 1.75
Learning the following languages is important for making me an educated person	<i>M</i> 3.86 <i>SD</i> 1.04	<i>M</i> 4.35 <i>SD</i> .84	<i>M</i> 4.34 <i>SD</i> .77	<i>M</i> 3.83 <i>SD</i> 1.01
Being proficient in the following languages makes other people respect me	<i>M</i> 3.75 <i>SD</i> 1.03	<i>M</i> 4.06 <i>SD</i> .97	<i>M</i> 4.10 <i>SD</i> .96	<i>M</i> 3.57 <i>SD</i> 1.05
Learning the following languages enables me to better understand and appreciate the way of life in Aruba	<i>M</i> 4.56 <i>SD</i> .70	<i>M</i> 3.62 <i>SD</i> 1.06	<i>M</i> 3.77 <i>SD</i> 1.00	<i>M</i> 3.38 <i>SD</i> 1.05

As can be seen in the table above, Aruban students are motivated to learn different languages for different reasons. On the one hand, English and Dutch play a major role in gaining respect from other people or in helping people to go through education. On the other hand, Papiamento is important to understand and appreciate the way of life in Aruba.

Besides the mentioned aspects to learn languages, participants of the focus groups mentioned one other very important reason to learn Papiamento. During the conversation it became very clear that Aruban students find it important to learn Papiamento because it will help advance the language (Focus group UA, 2016). According to the majority of the participants of the focus groups, Papiamento still has not developed as a language with a

clear grammar and vocabulary (Focus group UA, 2016; Focus group IPA, 2016). One participant indicated that Papiamento lacks words, because Papiamento has not been used in settings such as academic fields (Focus group UA, 2016). Therefore, Aruban students borrow words from other languages, which are consequently being adopted in Papiamento (Focus group UA, 2016). Overall, participants think that having Papiamento as one of the languages of instruction would help develop Papiamento. One participant indicated that “Papiamento does not necessarily have to be a must in the higher education, but it could most certainly be a beginning. For instance, if students want to become teachers, it would be good for them to have courses in Papiamento, so that they can later teach in Papiamento.” (Focus group UA, 2016).



*Table 8. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to examine Instrumental motivation (N = 184). (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish
Being proficient in the following languages will increase my career or business opportunities	M 3.93 SD 1.03	M 4.54 SD .63	M 4.66 SD .60	M 4.08 SD 1.02
Learning the following languages enables me to transfer my knowledge to other people	M 4.36 SD .80	M 4.34 SD .77	M 4.40 SD .76	M 4.04 SD .92
Learning the following languages enables me to participate freely in academic, social, and professional activities among other cultural groups in Aruba	M 4.41 SD .81	M 4.33 SD .85	M 4.46 SD .71	M 3.88 SD 1.04
I think that knowing the following languages is important for university courses	M 3.52 SD 1.12	M 4.52 SD .70	M 4.67 SD .53	M 3.24 SD 1.16

Table 8 shows that English scored the highest of all four languages regarding the integrative motivation. Apart from English, Dutch scored relatively high as well. A reason for this may be that English and Dutch are already instruction languages in the higher education in Aruba. In addition, these two languages play a major role in pursuing further education plans. For instance, in some cases students want to do a master's programme in the Netherlands or in the United States of America.

The relationship between a preference for a language and future plans was also discussed during the focus group with UA students. The participants indicated that “preference

depends on the goal of the student; does the student want to go to the Netherlands or does the student want to stay in Aruba? If the student wants to stay in Aruba then it is good to have Papiamento as a language of instruction. However, if a student wants to go to the Netherlands then he will be facing a lot of obstacles because he does not speak Dutch very well.” (Focus group UA, 2016).

### **Preference**

The last variable examined the preference for a language of instruction. The results are presented in the table below (Table 9).

*Table 9. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the items used to examine Preference (N = 180). (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)*

	Papiamento	Dutch	English	Spanish
The following languages are my most preferable languages of instruction	M 4.02 SD 1.07	M 3.81 SD 1.05	M 4.27 SD .94	M 2.47 SD 1.16
The following languages would make it easier to grasp the course content	M 4.08 SD 1.04	M 3.78 SD 1.07	M 4.26 SD .94	M 2.58 SD 1.14
The following languages would provide great benefits to my follow-up study	M 3.22 SD 1.26	M 4.31 SD .87	M 4.58 SD .62	M 3.01 SD 1.26
The following languages would provide great benefits to future business opportunities	M 3.91 SD 1.07	M 4.47 SD .74	M 4.72 SD .49	M 3.95 SD 1.14

Table 9 shows that English is the most preferable language of instruction. It is interesting to see that Papiamentu ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) is the second most preferable language after English with a higher average than Dutch ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ). Findings showed that even though respondents believe that English and Dutch provide great benefits to follow-up studies and future business opportunities, respondents also believe that Papiamentu would make it easier to comprehend the course content.

This is to some extent in line with the findings of the focus groups. Participants of the IPA focus group indicated that Papiamentu should be a language of instruction. However, one of the participants also stated that “it is good for the Aruban population to learn in their native language, but it is necessary that their Papiamentu is correct.” (Focus group IPA, 2016). Other participants agreed that one of the steps to develop Papiamentu is to have Papiamentu as a language of instruction. However, the UA focus group discussed some difficulties. For instance, one of the participants stated the following:

*“There is a great anxiety that if we change the language of instruction from Dutch to another language that children will not be able to go to college, because they are limited in their choice for a study, because of Papiamentu. There was also a discussion about the question: “Should we just switch to English?”. But then again, there are parents who say: “Yes, but then my children will not be able to study in the Netherlands”. Yet, if you look at the study results; the study results in America are so many times higher than in Aruba and in Aruba they are again many times higher than in the Netherlands, so why do we remain fixated on Dutch when in the end only 3% of the total student population comes back with a diploma [...]. So, we have a very large group that we do not give the opportunity to develop completely because of [...] policy makers and people who can determine these sort of things. Other people who would like to make a change and use other languages are not in the position to make those*

*changes.”* (Focus group UA, 2016).

The findings show that Aruban students would like to have Papiamentu as one of the languages of instruction. However, there are various issues that need to be taken into account. These will be discussed in more detail in the discussion.

## Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine which language(s) of the four most spoken languages in Aruba are preferred as a language of instruction in higher education. To answer this question, this study focussed on three aspects which may correlate with the choice of preference for a language of instruction. These three aspects are: attitude towards the four most spoken languages in Aruba, situations in which different languages are spoken and motivational aspects to learn languages Aruban students are proficient in.

Firstly, the findings of the present study show that Aruban students are very positive towards the fact that multiple languages are spoken in Aruba. According to the findings, students appreciate all four languages almost equally. Though it is accepted and appreciated that more languages are spoken in Aruba, students see disadvantages because their language proficiency is being influenced by speaking many languages at the same time. In addition, findings showed that students are very positive towards Papiamentu regarding the cultural identity. This is also in line with the findings presented in Leuverink’s (2015) article where she described that Papiamentu is a very important language for the Aruban population. Knowing this, it can be concluded that Papiamentu plays a significant role in everyday communication in Aruba. Previous research showed that Papiamentu is a crucial communication tool in Aruba (Kester & Fun, 2012). However, the findings of the present research showed that English is seen as one of the languages that is needed more than the other three languages. From this it can be concluded that English is becoming more important due to aspects such as tourism and internationalisation.

Further, the findings showed that Papiamentu is the language used the most in conversations with different speaking partners. This is in line with the findings of Beheydt (2008) who found that Papiamentu is being adopted as a colloquial language. However, Papiamentu together with Spanish is used less often than Dutch and English in different situations. From the findings it can be concluded that Papiamentu scored lower because there are not many resources available in Papiamentu. For instance, books, movies and magazines are mostly available in English, which makes it difficult for Papiamentu to be used in these different situations. Consequently, Papiamentu has not been given the chance to develop at another level other than being used as a colloquial language.

Moreover, it is interesting to see that the majority of the students is very motivated to learn different languages for different reasons. For instance, English and Dutch were seen as very crucial for future plans, such as follow-up studies and future business opportunities. In addition, findings showed that Papiamentu is very much appreciated by the Aruban students. However, Papiamentu is not as developed as English or Dutch. For this reason, Aruban students stated that it is very important to learn Papiamentu in order to develop and improve the language.

Lastly, the majority of the students preferred English as the language of instruction in the higher education. English is perceived as a language that offers more benefits for the future. However, it is striking to see that Papiamentu is preferred over Dutch. These findings are not in line with the findings of Leuverink (2011) who found that Dutch is the most favoured language of instruction. This was also found by Kester and Van der Linde (2015) who found that high school students are very positive towards Dutch as a language of instruction. However, Kester and Van der Linde (2015) found that high school students are also positive towards Papiamentu.

In summary, the findings showed that Aruban students are very positive towards all four languages spoken most in Aruba (Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish). In

addition, findings showed that Papiamentu is the main language of communication with various speaking partners whereas English is used most often in different situations. Moreover, findings showed that learning Papiamentu is very crucial for the Aruban students in order to develop and improve the language. Lastly, the findings showed that English is the most preferable language of instruction. However, Aruban students also have preference for Papiamentu as a language of instruction.

That being said, it is suggested to use Papiamentu as one of the languages of instruction at the University of Aruba and IPA. In order to implement this in the educational system it is recommended to do more research. It would be interesting to see to what extent Papiamentu should be implemented for different study programmes. For instance, it would be interesting to examine how many courses should be taught in Papiamentu.

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It is January 28th, 8 o'clock in the evening. Six sleepy girls successfully made it through customs, and the roaring air-conditioning in the Arrivals hall gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "fresh off the plane". As soon as we step outside, the warm night air welcomes us to the island that will be our home for the next few months. Shortly after, our enthusiastic welcome committee arrives to pick us up, and our Aruban adventure has officially started! Forget all about jet-lags; there's simply no time to even think about that. Our first week seems to be a crash-course 'Aruba for dummies': the curriculum is filled with excursions, meeting the most interesting people, and getting used to a whole new culture. We learn all about the necessary basics: say bon día to everyone you see, buy groceries in Chinese supermarkets and do not - not ever! - accept plastic bags in shops, unless you enjoy feeling guilty whenever you see a plastic bag stuck in a cactus. Naturally, that one e-mail saying I had permission to go

to Aruba put an enormous smile on my face. As I was a latecomer to the project, this gave me exactly six weeks to prepare myself for a six-month long stay on the other side of the world. Fortunately, this challenged me to put into practice what I learned during my Master's programme Intercultural Communication. In this programme I was taught to avoid the disadvantages of an essentialist worldview. We were discouraged to form an expectation of any culture and the unavoidable stereotypes that come with it. In short: I learned that one of the best ways to immerse yourself in a new culture, is simply to keep your eyes, ears and - above all - your mind open.

Needless to say, taking part in the UAUCU//UU programme taught me a lot. The close collaboration with our Aruban colleagues offered me new insights I would never have had back in the Netherlands. Also, to stay close to my own subject, I experienced from up-close how people live together in one of the most impressive multilingual communities I have ever seen. But that is certainly not all. Seeing how a small country deals with big issues like waste-management and sustainability showed me just how complicated these matters are. This programme truly opened my eyes to the importance of fast development in this domain worldwide.

Now the first part of my adventure is coming to an end, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Roselinde Supheert for always being helpful and available. Thank you for your feedback, for being flexible with time zones and for your patience with my not-so-stable Skype connection. A special thanks to my colleagues, of which a few happened to be my roommates as well. Thank you for your advice, proofreading and overall good company. This project has been an amazing adventure and I am happy and grateful to have shared it with such a lovely group of people. And last, but most definitely not least, I want to thank Eric Mijts and Jocelyn Ballantyne for your endless energy and enthusiasm throughout the project, and for always being there when we needed advice or simply a good pep-talk.

# The role of English in Aruba's linguistic landscape

## *Representation of Aruba's four dominant languages in written form in the public sphere*

Fardau Mirjam Bamberger

### 1. Introduction

Aruba, the smallest of the three ABC islands in the Caribbean, lies just off the coast of Venezuela and is home to 103,441 people (World Bank, 2015). The island, which is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, has had two official languages since 2003, Dutch and Papiamentu (Leuverink, 2011). However, its inhabitants are generally multilingual and speak, in varying combinations, the dominant languages Papiamentu, Dutch, Spanish and English (CBS Aruba, 2014). In a multilingual society, apart from hearing many languages being spoken in daily life, one also comes across a great variety in written languages that can be found in public domains. The present study will focus on the latter, and will examine written language in the public sphere by means of linguistic landscaping. Using linguistic landscaping to investigate different areas will help expose the dynamics behind language choice on the island (Kotze & Du Plessis, 2010). Specifically, this study will look at the status of English on the island, which seems to be used increasingly and has high prestige (Carroll, 2015) even though it is not an official language. There is reason to believe the role of English in Aruba might change in the future: the expansion of American tourism in Aruba plays an important part in this respect, and many islanders encourage their children to pursue higher education in the United States. If these trends continue at a steady rate, it

might even be possible for English to eventually become an official language in Aruba. However, that is a bold assumption to make without conducting the necessary research. Therefore, this study aims to map the use of English across different neighbourhoods on the island, and will compare and contrast the findings. By doing so, it will become clear if, and if so, to what extent the other languages are influenced by the rise of English.

### 2. Context

To fully understand the present study's relevance, one must understand how Aruba became multilingual and why English plays a key role in the island's finances. Many languages, such as Mandarin, Portuguese and French creoles can be heard on the island nowadays, but Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish remain most used (Alofs, 2008). Of these four, Papiamentu is spoken in the majority of people's homes (CBS Aruba, 2014). The exact origins of Papiamentu are still under debate, but it is known that the language originates from creoles with African and Spanish influences. Nowadays, Papiamentu is an official language, with influences from Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English and several African languages (Alofs, 2008). Before the Spanish came to Aruba, the island was inhabited by native tribes. The languages spoken by these tribes have little to no influence on Aruba's present-day linguistic situation, let alone on Aruban culture



nowadays (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). Around 1499 the Spanish “discovered” Aruba, eradicating the natives and bringing the Spanish language to the island. They were in control of Aruba until 1636 and, even though Spanish presence varied in the ages to follow, the language survived on the island and currently enjoys covert prestige (Carroll, 2015).

In 1636, the Dutch West India Company seized the island from the Spanish, and Aruba became a part of the Dutch Antilles. In 1845 this Dutch Caribbean colony consisted of Curacao, Aruba, Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius and half of the island of Sint Maarten (Alofs, 2008). However, since the 1940s, Aruba aspired a direct relationship with the Netherlands, mainly due to tensions with Curacao. Aruba was granted the status aparte, and obtained autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1986 (Hoefte, 1996). English gained importance on the island in the early twentieth century, when the oil industry started and many immigrants, with varying linguistic backgrounds, came to Aruba for work. Over the years, migration within the Caribbean has contributed to the use of English as well. Nowadays English is the most important language in tourism on the island, as this business is tailored towards visitors from the US and Canada (Alofs, 2008).

The touristic appeal of the Caribbean has a major influence on the island’s economic situation and is its main source of income. Until 1985, Aruba used to rely mainly on its oil refinery, LAGO, which opened in the 1920s. The oil business and tourist industry that developed from the 1950s onwards were the two major pillars which Aruban economy relied on. Yet since the refinery closed in 1985, the island has been mainly dependent on tourists coming to the island (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). Recent numbers indicate that tourists already bring in 68% of the island’s income (Ridderstaat, 2014) and the expansion of tourism has been on the government’s agenda continuously, especially since LAGO closed down (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). Most tourists coming to Aruba are native speakers of English, visiting from the United States of America. The number of visitors per year has climbed steadily over the past decades, and has

reached over 1 million visitors per year since 2014, of which over 600,000 people are visiting from the USA (ATA, 2014). With this linguistic history in mind, it is striking that even though Dutch has been spoken on the island for centuries and is an official language, it is the L1 for only 6% of the population, whereas Papiamentu is the mother tongue for 69%. Spanish is spoken at home by 13.5% of the population. English, on the other hand, has 7% of L1 speakers (CBS Aruba, 2010). Even though the numbers of Dutch and English L1 speakers are comparable, it seems that English has more overt prestige than Dutch, at least among highly educated Arubans. A study by Leuwerink indicates that most highly educated Arubans believe that using English gives them a higher status. Moreover, participants in Leuwerink’s study said that proficiency in English makes it easier to find a job (2011), which could stem from the fact that English is the main language within the tourist industry. As this industry is continually expanding this gives reason to believe that the use of English could be increasing in Aruba. Leuwerink’s research was conducted within the Ministry of Education’s project “Adviesgroep Taalraad” focusing on the development of a linguistic policy for Aruba, as the Ministry aims to establish a structure within multilingualism (Leuwerink, 2011). Other recent research has indicated that the use of Dutch declines in education, tourism, business and governmental institutions (Mijts, 2006). Research by Dijkhoff & Pereira (2010) suggests a problem regarding language in education in the entire Caribbean. Their study indicates that in Aruba, Dutch is mainly used as instruction language in primary and secondary education (Dijkhoff & Pereira, 2010), whereas English is common in higher education. For example, the University of Aruba states to offer classes in both English and Dutch (University of Aruba, 2016).

### **3. Literature review**

#### **3.1 Linguistic landscaping in theory**

Linguistic landscaping is a relatively new system of research in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. The concept is

used in several ways. Occasionally, the term has been used to describe and analyse the language situation in specific areas. Other studies include the history of language or different levels of language knowledge in certain areas, and the term is even used to describe the linguistic system, spread and boundaries of a single language or dialect (Backhaus, 2007). In the present study, linguistic landscaping refers to “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region” (Landry & Bourhis 1997, p. 23), and will be executed by means of a ‘camera safari’ (Hancock, 2012), which means that photographs of written language will be taken and analysed. Studying the linguistic landscape of multilingual areas provides insight into the status of linguistic codes that are used in the community. It is commonly believed that an area’s linguistic landscape “functions as an informational marker on the one hand, and as a symbolic marker communicating the relative power and status of linguistic communities in a given territory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Spolsky & Cooper, 1991 in Ben-Rafael et. al, 2006, p. 8)”.

### 3.2 Linguistic landscaping in practice

Previous studies regarding tourism, multilingual urban landscapes and English as a world language help clarify what one can expect to find by using linguistic landscaping

as an instrument. In a study concerning the use of an authentic language in a tourist village in Ireland, it became clear that a local language is sometimes used in touristic areas to create an authentic image and attract tourists (Moriarty, 2015). However, another study pointed out that commercial companies adjust their output to their customers’ understanding and cultural background (Hornikx et al., 2010). This raises questions about what this would mean for touristic areas in Aruba: do companies use English to suit their customers’ understanding or do they choose to use the more authentic Papiamentu?

Furthermore, the role of English as a global language should not be overlooked. English emerged when Aruba’s oil industry began to flourish in the 1920’s, and has most likely functioned as a lingua franca between employees of different cultural backgrounds (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). As tourists are Aruba’s main source of income nowadays, and most tourist’s main language is English, English may still be functioning as lingua franca on the island. Used in this way, English meets Kachru’s criteria for the Expanding Circle of English. Kachru’s famous theory divides the English speaking world in three categories: the Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. The illustration below visualizes how countries are divided across the spectrum.

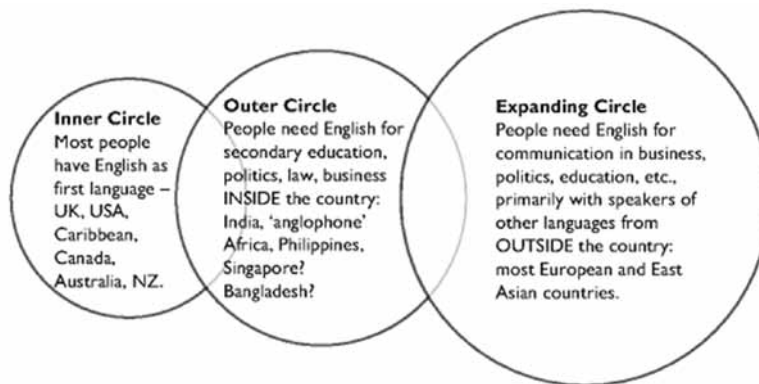


Figure 1. Kachru's Circle model (Melchers & Shaw, 2013, p. 8).



This indicates that, if the Aruban government is now beginning to use English as a means of communication inside the country, the country's status might be shifting towards the Outer Circle (Melchers & Shaw, 2013).

Several studies investigating linguistic landscapes are using categories to analyse written language across different areas. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) compare use of Israel-Hebrew, Arabic and English in Israeli cities to discover patterns in the linguistic landscapes of communities where Israeli Jews, Palestinian Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians live. First of all, written language was subdivided between Top-down and *Bottom-up*. Kotze & Du Plessis (2010) follow a similar approach in their study regarding language use in the Xhariep (South Africa), and both studies add further categorisation to be able to distinguish language use per domain. In both cases, adding categories helped to bring clarity to how multilingual societies function. It appears that knowing what languages are preferred in each category helps to gain a better understanding of society.

### 3.3 Research questions

This study aims to investigate the presence of English in Aruban society nowadays, and more specifically, to gauge the position of the other dominant languages in a climate in which English, an unofficial language, seems to be on the rise. Investigating the island's linguistic landscape could give answers to these questions, as a community's linguistic landscape functions as "an informational and symbolic marker, communicating the relative power and status of linguistic communities" (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006, p.9). In Aruba, written languages in the public sphere are not limited to the two official languages, Dutch and Papiamentu, and a linguistic policy does not exist. More knowledge on the linguistic landscape of Aruba creates awareness on language use and could potentially be helpful in the process of constructing of a language policy. This study will help fill a gap, as little is known about the linguistic situation in Aruba in general. Linguistic landscaping has never been performed on the island,

and it is therefore relevant to consider the current use of written languages in this multilingual community. Aruba is currently experiencing rapid changes, and is aiming for a modern image regarding sustainability and development. Well-organized communication is necessary to bring these goals across, and, in an age where globalisation and internationalisation is fast growing, more knowledge on multilingual situations is highly valuable. Contact with speakers of different languages is becoming more and more common worldwide, yet is even more common on this small, already multilingual island. Considering the above, the following main research question has been formulated:

*How are Aruba's four dominant languages represented in the linguistic landscape of its multilingual society, and what is the role of English in Aruban society?*

To be able to answer the main research question, the following sub questions will be used:

1. *Does presence of the four dominant languages differ per area?*
2. *How are Aruba's four dominant languages represented in different categories?*

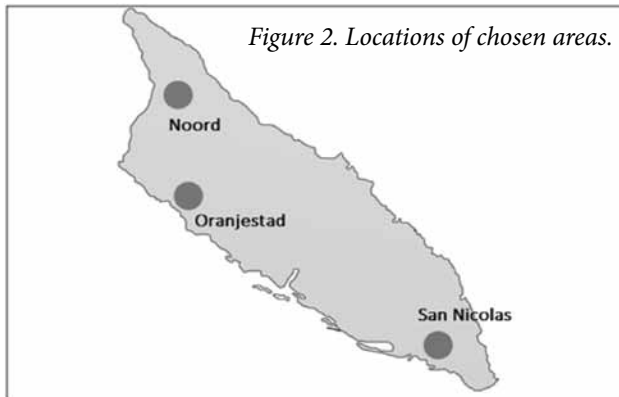
## 4. Method

The present study will investigate the presence of English in Aruban society and will be carried out using a quantitative method (Dörnyei, 2007). The sub questions will be answered by means of linguistic landscaping, which in this case means that all written language in specific areas of the public sphere will be photographed and analysed. The data will be categorized based on models used by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), and Kotze & Du Plessis (2010) where all items are first subdivided into either Top-down or Bottom-up messages. As the present study is small-scale and will therefore cover fewer and smaller areas than Ben-Rafael et al. or Kotze & Du Plessis, their models will be simplified to fit the scope of this study.

## 4.1 Materials

### 4.1.1 Locations

Three urban areas were chosen for this part of the research. In Aruba, the distinction between cities, towns and barrios (neighbourhoods) is not entirely clear. Within Aruban society these terms are synonyms. Therefore, this study will simply refer to different locations as areas, to stay as neutral as possible. The linguistic landscape of Oranjestad, Noord and San Nicolas will be compared to one another. Each of the areas has both authentic as well as tourist streets, and as the areas are distributed evenly across the densely populated parts of the island, they are an accurate representation of Aruban society. This is made visible in Figure 2 below. The eastern part of Aruba will not be included in this study, as that corner of the island does not have urban areas. Rural areas will not be included in this study, as written language occurs less outside of towns and will therefore not provide enough data to draw reliable conclusions.



From each of these three areas two streets will be covered. One of the streets will be a tourist-oriented street, and the other will be in an authentic part of the area. Specific details concerning the streets can be found in the table below. A good indicator of an authentic area is public transport; places for public transport for locals and tourists differ fundamentally in Aruba. According to local knowledge, tourists tend to travel with big coaches that depart on set times, whereas locals use small vans that depart as soon as enough passengers have entered the vehicle. All signs or posters for a length of 600 meters of the starting point will be photographed to ensure a valid comparison. The number of items per street may vary. However, a difference in sign density could point to interesting conclusions as well. Excel sheets will be used for coding.

### 4.1.2 Items

To analyse written language in the public sphere a number of conditions needs to be set to eliminate invalid or impracticable data. Items will need to meet several criteria before they can be analysed. For this study, items will only be picked for categorisation if they are readable from street level; thus everything on, slightly above or under eye level. Damaged items (i.e. heavily weathered signs, damaged posters) will be eliminated from selection. In the case of shop windows items that are placed directly on the glass will be included, but items that are merely visible from outside will be deemed invalid. Additionally, the items need to be stationary.

	<b>Authentic street</b>	<b>Touristic street</b>
<b>Oranjestad (OS)</b>	Wilhelminastraat – Bus stop Doña Clara	Caya G. F. Betico Croes – Main shopping street
<b>San Nicolas (SN)</b>	Bernhardstraat – Bus stop main square	Bernard Van de Veen Zeppefeldstraat – (former) Main street
<b>Noord (NO)</b>	Caya Frans Figaroa – Bus stop	Route 3, Hotel strip Palm Village

Table 1. Specification of analysed streets

In cases where there are several items on one building, all items will be categorised separately. This means that if a distinction is clear (different material, separate sheet of paper), items will be split. Multiple identical contiguous posters on one wall will be counted as one item. Multiple identical posters in one street, but separated by other posters or a blank space, will be counted as independent items. Contiguous stickers (mostly Visa and MasterCard signs) on shop windows will be counted as one item, as they never appear separately and appear to be printed on one sticker sheet.

#### 4.1.3 Procedure

*Top-down messages* will be subdivided into 3 domains: *Cultural*, *Educational*, and *Governmental*. This division

is based on previous research by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) and Kotze & Du Plessis (2010). Each of these domains originally had subdomains and divisions. For example, an item in the category *Government*, could be subdivided into the domain *Government agencies*, which has *Police station* and *Post office* as specific divisions. As the present study does not focus on any categorisation beyond the initial domains, the subdomains and divisions were deemed redundant for the final analysis. However, the subdomains and divisions were used in the categorisation and coding process, as they helped to ensure that items were placed in the correct domains. A complete, adjusted list of domains, their respective subdomains and divisions can be found in Table 2.

Domain	Subdomain	Division
Cultural	Museums	
	National monuments	
Educational	Schools	
Governmental	Government agencies	Police station
		Post office
	General government	Road signage
		Warning

Table 2. *Top-down categorisation.*

The *Bottom-up* items will be categorised in a similar manner. First they will be subdivided into three domains: *Commercial*, *Private* and *Religious*. Again, each of these domains have subdomains and divisions, which can be found in the table below (figure 2). For example, a sign saying “Beware of the dog” will be categorized as follows: *Private – Warning*. Again, subdomains and division will only be used to bring clearance during the categorisation

and coding phase. Kotze & Du Plessis’ model (2010) makes a further distinction between *Private announcements* and *Private homes*. To fit the present study’s small scale these categories have been combined as *Private*, and for the same reason a category named *Public demarcation* has been eliminated from the original model completely. The division *Banks* was eliminated from analysis, as photographing banks would go against most banks’ security policies.

Domain	Subdomain	Division	
Commercial	Goods for sale		
	Posters for events		
	Hotels/guesthouses		
	Services	Real estate	
		Security	
		Banks	
	Shops	Shop name	
		Shop offers	
Restaurants/food shops	Restaurant name		
	Restaurant offers		
Private	Community news		
	Graffiti		
	Ownership/decoration		
	Warning		
	Affiliation	Political	
		Religious	
Sports			
Religious	Churches		

Table 3. Bottom-up categorisation.

After categorising the items into domains, they will be analysed for language use. Apart from the four dominant language categories *English*, *Dutch*, *Papiamentu* and *Spanish*, a fifth category, *Neutral*, will be used during the categorisation phase to filter out empty items. For instance, company names or shop names will be coded as neutral, as they are likely to be the same in every language. Additionally, words that are the same in two or more languages, such as open (which is the same in English and Dutch) will be coded as *Neutral*. To ensure correct categorisation, a native speaker of Papiamentu will be consulted to distinguish between Papiamentu and Spanish. Multilingual signs, i.e. signs in two or more languages, will be coded as separate items. The present study does not focus on different combinations of languages that can be found in the linguistic landscape, but does strongly recommend further research into the matter in chapter 6.

## 5. Results

This chapter will present the results of the categorised items. These data will provide information that can give insight into the linguistic landscape of Aruba and the position of English in society, and thus answer the main research question. The chapter consists of two parts. In the first part, the overall use of the four dominant languages in the different areas will be described, regardless of the categories the items belong to (5.1). Secondly, data will be introduced that show in what categories the four languages are represented (5.2). The table below provides an overview of all abbreviations that will be used throughout the chapter.

<b>OS</b>	Oranjestad	<b>EN</b>	English	<b>Top</b>	Top-down	<b>Com</b>	Commercial
<b>SN</b>	San Nicolas	<b>NL</b>	Dutch	<b>Gov</b>	Governmental	<b>Pri</b>	Private
<b>NO</b>	Noord	<b>PA</b>	Papiamentu	<b>Cul</b>	Cultural	<b>Rel</b>	Religious
<b>AT</b>	Authentic	<b>SP</b>	Spanish	<b>Med</b>	Medical		
<b>TR</b>	Tourist	<b>NN</b>	Neutral	<b>Bot</b>	Bottom-up		

Table 4. Abbreviations as used in Results section.

It should be noted that due to limited numbers of items in some of the categories, the outcomes may not be generalisable. For a clear overview and a first impression of Aruba's linguistic

landscape, the overall outcomes concerning the presence of written language are shown in Table 5 below.

Language	Average (%)
<b>EN</b>	65.7
<b>NL</b>	8
<b>PA</b>	13.6
<b>SP</b>	4.3
<b>NN</b>	8.5
	100

Table 5. Average language use in the linguistic landscape of Aruba.

### 3.1 Sub question 1: Does presence of the four dominant languages differ per area?

Below, Table 6 summarises the number of items in the four dominant languages of Aruba per investigated area. In total, 922 items were analysed. The vertical axis on the left shows

the languages included in the study. The horizontal axis on the top indicates in what area and which street the languages were found in. The numbers are item percentages, followed by the total number of items (n) in brackets.

	<b>OS</b>		<b>SN</b>		<b>NO</b>	
	<b>AT % (n)</b>	<b>TR % (n)</b>	<b>AT % (n)</b>	<b>TR % (n)</b>	<b>AT % (n)</b>	<b>TR % (n)</b>
<b>EN</b>	52.2 (118)	76.1 (150)	66.5 (109)	66.3 (126)	60.7 (88)	72.5 (124)
<b>NL</b>	8.8 (20)	3.6 (7)	6.7 (11)	11.6 (22)	13.8 (20)	3.5 (6)
<b>PA</b>	19.9 (45)	7.6 (15)	12.8 (21)	11.6 (22)	17.2 (25)	12.3 (21)
<b>SP</b>	9.3 (21)	6.6 (13)	6.7 (11)	0.5 (1)	0.7 (1)	1.8 (3)
<b>NN</b>	10.2 (23)	6.1 (12)	7.3 (12)	10.0 (19)	7.6 (11)	9.9 (17)
<b>Total</b>	100 (226)	100 (197)	100 (164)	100 (190)	100 (145)	100 (171)

Table 6. Total of language use (percentage and total number).

As can be seen in the top row of Table 6, English makes up the majority of all written items in the public sphere. This is the same for all areas. On average, 65.7% of all items were written in English. Interestingly, in each area, it can be seen that the percentage of English used is similar or higher in the tourist area than in the authentic area.

Oranjestad in general appears to be more multilingual than the other areas. Multiple items in all dominant languages have been found here, but none of the other three languages is used as much as English. Figure 3 below gives an example of a multilingual sign in Oranjestad.

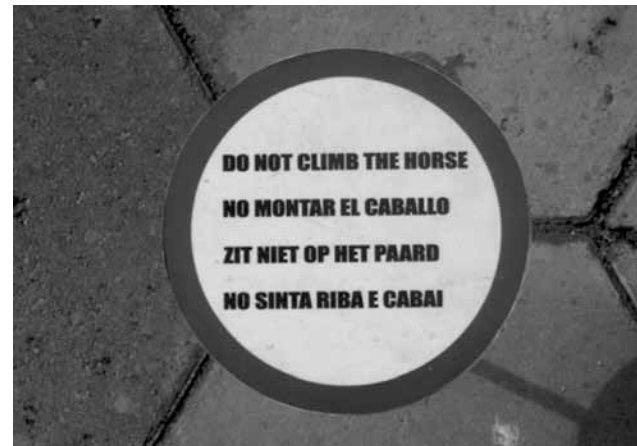
The highest percentage of English can be found in Oranjestad's tourist street, which also lies in the western, most touristic part of the island. It is noteworthy that even though this is the case, the use of English in Oranjestad's authentic street has the lowest percentage of English of all streets, and Papiamentu plays a bigger role here than it does elsewhere. In line with the observation that Oranjestad is more multilingual than the other areas, Spanish appears to be most popular in Oranjestad's authentic area than anywhere else.

San Nicolas shows a slightly different pattern. The percentages of English use are still high, but interestingly, Papiamentu appears to be used less here. Spanish is also used in San Nicolas' authentic area, but seems to disappear in the tourist street. San Nicolas appears to be the only area that has more Dutch in its touristic street than in its authentic street. However, since San Nicolas has not attracted many tourists since LAGO closed in 1985, its touristic street may not have adapted to the increasing number of American tourists yet. Apart from San Nicolas, Dutch appears more in authentic streets than in tourist streets. However, it must be noted that the touristic street included one bar that had many signs in Dutch, which, on the one hand, might have distorted the results somewhat. On the other hand, as the tourist value of San Nicolas has decreased since LAGO closed, the high amount of Dutch could be a remnant of another time, in which Dutch was more popular in general.

Noord shows more or less the same pattern: English is most

present and Papiamentu follows at a distance. Papiamentu scores are more similar than in other areas, when comparing the tourist area to the authentic area. Like in San Nicolas, Dutch is used more in written language than Spanish. In fact, Spanish seems to be almost non-existent in this area, with only four items in total.

In conclusion, all areas roughly exhibit the same pattern as Table 5. English is dominant in all investigated areas and Papiamentu comes second, regardless of whether the streets are authentic or touristic. Authentic streets and tourist streets do tend to vary when it comes to Spanish and Dutch. However, due to limited numbers of items, no clear conclusions can be drawn concerning Spanish and Dutch in this section of the paper.



*Figure 3. Item from Oranjestad's tourist area showing all four dominant languages.*

### **3.2 Sub question 2: How are Aruba's four dominant languages distributed across different categories?**

English turned out to be the most used written language in the public sphere in Aruba in general. However, before drawing conclusions, the use of language per category needs to be specified further. Therefore, a closer look will be taken

at language choice per category. First of all, the distribution of English will be discussed, followed by Dutch, Papiamentu

and Spanish. Table 7 below shows how English items are divided across categories in percentages.

English	OS		SN		NO		Total % (n)
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	
<b>TopGov</b>	7.6 (9)	2.0 (3)	4.6 (5)	10.3 (13)	2.3 (2)	2.4 (3)	4.9 (35)
<b>TopCul</b>	1.7 (2)	1.3 (2)	0.9 (1)	0.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (6)
<b>TopMed</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	14.7 (13)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (13)
<b>BotCom</b>	84.7 (100)	96.0 (144)	92.6 (101)	86.5 (109)	79.5 (70)	96.0 (119)	89.9 (643)
<b>BotPri</b>	5.1 (6)	0.6 (1)	1.8 (2)	2.4 (3)	3.4 (3)	1.6 (2)	2.4 (17)
<b>BotRel</b>	0.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.1 (1)
	100 (118)	100 (150)	100 (109)	100 (126)	100 (88)	100 (124)	100 (715)

Table 7. Division of English items across different categories in specific areas in percentages and item numbers.

It becomes immediately clear that most written items fall into the category *Bottom up – Commercial*. Within that category, the tourist street in Oranjestad is the area that has most of its *Bottom-up* commercial messages in English, compared to the other areas. Even though English is represented less in the other categories, it is revealing that English is present in *Top-down – Government*, even if this category only makes up for 4.9% of all English items. As mentioned before, English is

not an official language in Aruba, which would make its use by governmental institutions less likely. English is used less in the other categories. Even though English is not present in every category in every area, it is interesting that English is represented in every category when looking at the area as a whole, which might indicate that English is present on most levels of daily life in Aruba in general. Figure 4 shows an example of an English item in San Nicolas.



Figure 4. Example of an English *Bottom-up – Commercial* item from San Nicolas' tourist street.



Secondly, the use of Dutch items within categories will be analysed. Table 8 below illustrates the use of Dutch in Aruban society.

Dutch	OS		SN		NO		Total % (n)
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	
<b>TopGov</b>	80.0 (16)	42.8 (3)	45.5 (5)	31.8 (7)	20.0 (4)	33.3 (2)	43.0 (37)
<b>TopCul</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
<b>TopMed</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	15.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	3.5 (3)
<b>BotCom</b>	10.0 (2)	42.9 (3)	54.5 (6)	63.3 (14)	65.0 (13)	66.7 (4)	48.8 (42)
<b>BotPri</b>	5.0 (1)	14.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	4.6 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.5 (3)
<b>BotRel</b>	5.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.2 (1)
	100 (20)	100 (7)	100 (11)	100 (22)	100 (20)	100 (6)	100.0 (86)

Table 8. Division of Dutch items across different categories in specific areas in percentages and item numbers.

It is obvious that Dutch is used most in two categories: *Top-down – Government* and *Bottom-up – Commercial*. The use of Dutch as a top-down language is relatively constant, with one peak in the authentic street of Oranjestad and lower numbers in touristic streets in Noord and Oranjestad. The peak could be explained by the fact that Oranjestad is the capital of Aruba, and naturally most government buildings can be found in this area. Overall, the high number of Dutch in the commercial sector stems from items in San Nicolas' tourist street and Noord's authentic street. Dutch peaks in these two streets and is lower in Oranjestad's authentic street. It must be noted that the peaks in the data sets from San Nicolas and Noord both originate from a single bar with an abundance of Dutch wall decoration, which has not been found in Oranjestad. As Dutch was barely present in other commercial items, it seems likely that the peaks do not represent the entire island and the data have been distorted by the bars. Moreover, Dutch is not present at all in cultural items. This may have to do with museums focusing on tourists and therefore choosing English. However, the items included a number of memorial statues as well, which did not feature Dutch either. This may have had to do with the fact that the people featured in the statues were not Dutch. In the private domain Dutch scores low overall, with only

single, or even zero items per street. When it comes to the religious domain, Dutch is only present once in the authentic part of Oranjestad. An example of an item in Dutch can be seen in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5. Example of Dutch Bottom-up – Commercial item in Noord's authentic area.



Thirdly, Papiamento will be examined. Table 9 below shows the presence of Papiamento in different categories in percentages.

Papiamento	OS		SN		NO		Total % (n)
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	
<b>TopGov</b>	20.0 (9)	20.0 (3)	9.5 (2)	13.6 (3)	12.0 (3)	9.5 (2)	14.8 (22)
<b>TopCul</b>	0.0 (0)	20.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.0 (3)
<b>TopMed</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	4.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.7 (1)
<b>BotCom</b>	57.7 (26)	53.3 (8)	81.0 (17)	86.4 (19)	84.0 (21)	90.5 (19)	73.8 (110)
<b>BotPri</b>	15.5 (7)	6.7 (1)	4.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	6.0 (9)
<b>BotRel</b>	6.7 (3)	0.0 (0)	4.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (4)
	100 (45)	100 (15)	100 (21)	100 (22)	100 (25)	100 (21)	100.0 (149)

Table 9. Division of Papiamento items across different categories in specific areas.

Once again, numbers for *Bottom-up – Commercial* are high. However, the lower percentages are relevant too. *Top-down – Governmental* comes in second place, as 13% of all Papiamento items belong to this category. Most of these items can be found in Oranjestad's authentic neighbourhood. Papiamento is rare in the cultural domain; it was only found in the touristic area of Oranjestad. The only medical item in Papiamento was found in Noord's authentic area. Commercial items can be found quite often in all categories, except for Oranjestad's tourist street, which is close to the main entrance port for tourists from cruise ships. This could indicate that Papiamento is not used to communicate with tourists. However, in souvenir shops, the word *dushi* (meaning sweet or nice) is used as a brand name or shirt print occasionally. Private messages in Papiamento occurred most in the authentic street in Oranjestad. Overall, Papiamento is a top-down as well as a bottom-up language. Figure 6 below shows a Papiamento item in the commercial domain.



Figure 6. Example of a Bottom-up – Commercial message in Papiamento in Oranjestad's authentic street

Table 10 below shows how Spanish items are represented in different categories.

Spanish	OS		SN		NO		Total % (n)
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	
<b>TopGov</b>	0.0 (0)	8.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	33.3 (1)	4.1 (2)
<b>TopCul</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
<b>TopMed</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
<b>BotCom</b>	100.0 (21)	91.6 (11)	100.0 (11)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	66.7 (2)	93.9 (46)
<b>BotPri</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.0 (1)
<b>BotRel</b>	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
	100 (21)	100 (12)	100 (11)	100 (1)	100 (1)	100 (3)	100.0 (49)

Table 10. Division of Spanish items across different categories in specific areas.

Clearly, Spanish is less visible in Aruba's linguistic landscape than the other three languages. The only *Top-down* messages in Spanish that occur in this study were found in touristic areas in Noord and Oranjestad. No Spanish was found in either cultural or medical domains. Spanish is most present in *Bottom-up – Commercial*, and within this category most of the items can be found in Oranjestad and San Nicolas. Only one Spanish item was found in Noord. An example of Spanish in San Nicolas can be seen in Figure 7.

To answer the second sub question correctly, it is important to realise that, in general, most of Aruba's linguistic landscape consists of commercial messages and all four dominant languages were found to be used most for these kinds of messages. Within this category, English is the most popular choice. In short, English can be found in all categories, but is mostly used for commercial messages. This can partly be explained by the fact that tourists speak English and they are, in general, expected to spend money while on vacation. Another explanation could be that, with such a variety of languages being spoken on the island, English is chosen as a lingua franca for the commercial sector, as everyone needs to be able to find their way around shops for the shops to be successful. After analysing results for Dutch items, it



Figure 7. Example of a Spanish *Bottom-up – Commercial* item in San Nicolas' authentic area.

becomes clear that Dutch is used mainly for governmental messages and commercial messages. Numbers for these two categories are similar. Dutch is represented in all categories, except for cultural. This implies that Dutch is mainly used for official, governmental messages, and that Arubans prefer Papiamentu, or even English, in museums and on monuments. Papiamentu, like English, is represented in all categories. Most Papiamentu items occur in the commercial domain, followed by governmental. Papiamentu and Dutch are the only two languages that appear regularly in *Top-down and Bottom-up* categories. Spanish is barely visible in the linguistic landscape. Items almost exclusively appear in the commercial domain.

## 6. Discussion & conclusion

This study investigates how Aruba's four dominant languages are represented in the linguistic landscape of its multilingual society, and specifies by looking at the role of English in Aruban society. By analysing how Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish are used in different areas, and by looking at how these languages are represented in different categories, the present study interprets the role and use of each language. Through this, the languages can be compared to one another. In light of the expanding tourism industry and Aruba's linguistic history, the role of the English language is addressed specifically. In the process of learning about Aruba's multilingual society, a sociolinguistic research method called linguistic landscaping was used. By means of a so-called "camera safari", three areas of Aruba were analysed. In each area, two streets were chosen for analysis. A total of 922 photos was taken. Previous research by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) and Kotze & Du Plessis (2010) inspired the present study's categorisation of the photos. By dividing the items into these six categories, and coding them accordingly, valuable results regarding Aruba's linguistic landscape were found.

It was found that most of the written language in Aruba's public sphere is in English; an average of 65.7% of all items

were written in, or contained the English language, although this is not one of the country's official languages. English is dominant in all six investigated streets, and thus in all areas as well. After English, Papiamentu is most present. It appears that Papiamentu, which is an official language, is the preferred language to use among locals. English is the preferred language to use to tourists, which is in line with Hornikx et al. (2010). Dutch, Aruba's second official language is used most in Oranjestad, which is the capital and, naturally, most governmental buildings and centres are located here. Dutch is used less in the other areas, indicating that this language is mostly used in the most urban and governmental area of the island. Spanish is used least of all languages in every area of Aruba. This finding is in line with recent findings, stating that Spanish has low prestige, and is particularly used within homes and friend groups.

Of all items that were analysed for the present study, the majority was found in the commercial domain. In this domain, English was most dominant. English turned out to be used in all categories; it was found in both *Top-down and Bottom-up* categories. Thus, English plays a role in daily life in Aruba, which could be a sign that Aruba is moving to Kachru's Outer Circle (Melchers & Shaw, 2013). Similarly, Papiamentu was used in all categories, strengthening the point that Papiamentu indeed is the language of the Aruban people. Like English, Papiamentu is used in both Bottom-up and Top-down categories. Dutch, however, is a typical top-down language. It is mostly used in governmental messages, and, as mentioned in the paragraph above, mostly in the capital as well. Dutch was rarely found in the other categories, which was also found in previous research (Mijts, 2006). In contrast, Spanish turns out to be a bottom-up language, as it was only found in the commercial sector.

### Limitations & suggestions

It is important to keep in mind that this study does not take the age of the items into account. Therefore, brand new as well as outdated signs have been analysed without distinction. Even though this might seem to undermine the

validity of the present study, it could be argued that although the signs differ in age, they do contribute to Aruba's linguistic landscape by merely being present. After all, what this study intends to do is to give an accurate representation of the linguistic landscape as it is.

Finally, the case of multilingual signs must be considered. In the present study's categorisation process, it turned out that Dutch rarely appears alone on signs. Results revealed that Dutch is mainly used by the government itself and other governmental institutions, but in most cases translations in other languages were added to the signs. The fact that Dutch is often accompanied by another language could indicate that people on Aruba, locals or tourists, are not expected to understand Dutch well-enough without translations. Unfortunately, the present study does not include enough data to draw reliable conclusions concerning this matter. Therefore, further research is recommended, as this observation might invite a review of the status of the Dutch language.

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Sitting in the classroom, waiting for the internet connection to cooperate with Skype, thoughts flew in and out of my mind. I was about to meet students from the Netherlands for the first time via Skype. Thousands of miles and a television screen separates us, and I AM NERVOUS?! Get a grip Felishah.

Joining this research program was something I gave a lot of thought to. I did not want to start something that I would not finish. Realizing how big of an opportunity this was, I decided to join the program and I am very happy I did. I knew it would be a personal challenge to be able to manage my time between doing my final internship and meeting different deadlines for school and this project. But it was one challenge I was willing to take on. My motivation for joining this program was very personal. I knew that I needed to start taking opportunities when they are set right before me. Being able to publish my paper in this book is too good of an

opportunity to pass by, and who knows when I would get an opportunity like this again.

The benefits of this project is that you meet students from various different programs studying different things. All having different personalities, opinions, thoughts. I made new friends and broadened my network. I learned a lot about different topics by hearing and reading the researches of other students. I learned time management skills, how to set priorities, how to see things in a new perspective, giving and receiving feedback.

I felt as if I had such a good support system behind my research. I felt happy to have been able to bring a social aspect to this project and it was as if every member of the program adopted a passion to fight for the right to accessibility for persons with disabilities. Being able to share your passion and receive that support, was something that impacted me a lot.

One experience that really had an impact on me was the boat trip where we sailed past Parkietenbos and I was able to see with my own eyes how every tree was full of plastic bags and other waste. I learned how the mangroves are dying because of the waste that blows from the dump into the water. I was never aware of how serious this issue is in Aruba until this experience.

All in all, this project has been an unforgettable experience and I am happy I got to experience it with such a great group of people.



# The emotional impact on people with physical disabilities striving to be independent in Aruba

Felishah Ponson

## Introduction

The World Health Organization (2015) describes disabilities as “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restriction. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations” (p.1). Research conducted by the World Health Organization (2011) shows that “more than a billion people are estimated to live with some form of disability, or about 15% of the world’s population (based on 2010 global population estimates)” (p.7).

The Health Monitor Aruba (2013) states that “persons with disabilities often belong to the most vulnerable groups in society. Compared to the general population, they are at greater risk of experiencing limitations when performing daily activities and/or experiencing restrictions of participation in society (p. 127).” The Health Monitor Aruba (2013), also shows that disability in mobility is the second most reported disability in Aruba. Table 1 illustrates statistical data on persons in Aruba who have problems with walking in 2010. This table shows that 2928 persons (2.9 percent of the total population of Aruba in 2010) have a disability in mobility, since they cannot walk or have a lot of problems with walking.

Table 1

*Amount of persons who have walking problems*

Problems Walking	Counts	%	Cumul %
No problem	86662	91.81115545	91.81115545
Yes, some problem	4802	5.086922618	96.89807807
Yes, a lot of problems	2389	2.530847209	99.42892528
Cannot do this at all	539	0.571074721	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>94391</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Note.* From “Central Bureau of Statistics,” 2010.



Research by the Department of Social Affairs of Aruba in 2009 concluded that the general perception of the population of Aruba is that having a chronic illness or disability in Aruba is the most difficult challenge to have. This is due to the fact that it would be hard to participate and have a social life in Aruba if you have to live with a chronic illness or disability (Kock, 2015). This study also concluded that personal mobility relates to the ability to move from one place to another for the purpose of accomplishing tasks, not only in the immediate environment but also outside of the home.

During a focus group discussion with persons with disabilities done two years later in 2011 by the Department of Social Affairs of Aruba, it was concluded that personal mobility is a problem in Aruba, especially for people with motor/ and or visual impairments. Most people with motor disabilities indicated that they rely on family and relatives for transportation. There was also a lot of criticism on the infrastructure of Aruba concerning the fact that it is very difficult for a wheelchair user, or anyone who has difficulty walking, to mobilize independently outdoors. Additionally, it was stated that there is no accessibility to many companies due to stairs and narrow doorways.

Both studies by the Department of Social Affairs lack an in depth view on how persons with a physical disability are emotionally effected by this challenge and how this effects their independence. Whereas this study does give that in depth information on the emotional impact on persons with physical disabilities, their personal experiences with this challenge, and how it effects their independence.

### **Research Questions**

The main research question is - How does accessibility to public spaces impact the emotional wellbeing and independence of persons with a disability in mobility?

The sub questions have been formulated as follows:

1. To what extent is there accessibility to public spaces in Aruba for persons with a disability in mobility?
2. To what extent can persons with a disability in mobility

in Aruba achieve independence?

3. What is the emotional impact of persons with a disability in mobility in relation to the accessibility to public spaces in Aruba?

### **Research Objectives**

This research explores the emotional impact of accessibility to public spaces for persons with a disability in mobility in Aruba and determines ways in which the levels of independence of persons with a disability in mobility might be affected when they are not able to access public spaces in Aruba.

The research objectives are the following:

1. To explore the emotional impact of accessibility to public spaces for persons with a disability in mobility in Aruba;
2. To determine ways in which the levels of independence of persons with a disability in mobility may be affected when accessing public spaces in Aruba; and
3. To explore the implications for social work practice in Aruba.

### **Relevance of the Study**

People with disabilities experience many challenges. They are often denied the right to school, employment, independence, and participation in the society. The mission of social work is to enhance human well-being and help meet the needs of all people, especially the vulnerable (NASW, 2008). Thus, as social workers, promoting social inclusion is important. Promoting social inclusion will ensure that everyone has the same chance to be an active participant in the community. In this way, nobody will be discriminated (Schirmer & Michailakis, 2015, p. 59).

This study is relevant by virtue of the core social work values. These are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence (National Association of Social Work, 2008). In this regard, by conducting this study, one is demonstrating the dignity and worth of persons with disabilities and

using evidence based research to make recommendations to improve services in Aruba. Therefore, it is anticipated that the findings of this research will be relevant to agencies such as Fundacion Arubano pa e Invalidonan (FUNARI), Fundacion Mi Por, Departamento di Asunto Social (DAS), The Ministry of Infrastructure, Dienst Openbare Werken (DOW), Plataforma pa Persona cu Limitacion (PPL), and can contribute to concerned policies, rules and regulations that are necessary to comply with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007).

The findings can also benefit the tourism sector in Aruba with insights about this topic, given the fact that Aruba also hosts tourists with mobility disabilities. Furthermore, Article 5.02 of the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2008), expresses the importance of social workers to conduct research to contribute to the development of knowledge. Additionally, the present study's findings and recommendations might be relevant for the Caribbean as a whole. Even though not all countries in the Caribbean are exactly the same, they are in the same region. Therefore

conclusions and recommendations from the present study might be helpful in the region in general, as neighboring countries could share the same problems regarding the topic.

## Theoretical Framework

In order to assess how persons with a disability in mobility are emotionally impacted by the accessibility to public spaces, and how this affects their level of independence, I have created a theoretical framework. With this theoretical framework, I looked at the extent of accessibility to public spaces that people with a mobility disability are able to access and how that affects their emotional well-being. I also looked at how the impact on their emotional well-being affected their level of independence. For this theoretical framework I made use of relevant theories and definitions used by authors such as Engwicht (1993, Michaelson et al. (2009) and Stokes, Turnbull and Wyn (2013) see theoretical framework below.



## Methodology

### Research Design

The design of this research is an applied research that is qualitative. Rajeskar, Philominathan, and Chinnathambi (2013) states some characteristics of applied research. Some examples of these characteristics are that applied research “studies individual or specific cases without the objective to generalize”, and “tries to say how things can be changed” (p.8).

Neuman (2007) describes qualitative researchers as trying “to create a subjective sense of empathy and understanding among readers in addition to presenting factual evidence and analytic interpretations” (p. 353). This is what I wanted to achieve when researching and writing about the emotional impacts that persons with physical disabilities experience in Aruba.

### Selection of Respondents

For this research I selected 12 persons, distributed as follows:

18 to 34 years:	4 persons (2 Male, 2 Female)
34 to 60 years:	4 persons (2 Male, 2 Female)
60+:	4 persons (2 Male, 2 Female)

For this research, theoretical selection is used. According to ‘t Hart (2005) theoretical selection is a form of targeted selection where the researcher selects units such as situations, events or persons based on their potential contribution to the analysis of the research. This selection is based on the criteria of age, gender and whether or not the respondents are clients of an organization that focuses on helping persons with physical disabilities (FUNARI or Mi Por). The age grouping is based on the psychosocial stages of life used in Newman and Newman (2010) which in turn is based on the psychosocial theory of Erikson. These criteria are important to my research because age, gender, and whether the respondents are clients of an organization or not might have an effect on their dependence and emotional well-being. Moreover, although I am aware that not all persons with a disability in mobility make use of a

wheelchair, making use of a wheelchair on structural bases was another selection criteria.

In practice, most persons that I needed for my interviews was not a challenge to find. With the help of social media, networking with other organizations such as FUNARI, which focuses on taking persons with a physical disability between the ages of 18 to 60 years out of isolation and motivates social participation in Aruba, the Department of Social Affairs, the hospital, Stichting Mi Por, which supports children and youths with a physical disability till the age of 21 in Aruba, and White Yellow Cross, I was able to reach the participants for my interviews.

### Data Collection

The data collection instrument that I used to collect my data is semi structured one-on-one interviews. Firstly, I created a topic list with the topics and questions that I wanted to ask to my interviewees. Once the list was approved by my research coach, I started scheduling time and dates with persons that fit the criteria for an interview. During the interview I used a voice recorder from my laptop (with permission of the interviewee) and recorded the whole interview. I took notes as well in order to remember all information that was mentioned during the interview. I did the interviews in the most spoken language of the person (Papiamentu, English or Dutch) and I tried to make sure that the environment and surroundings during the interview were quiet and tranquil. I did this to create a safe climate for the respondents to speak; on the other hand I aimed for doing the interviews in 45-60 minutes. During interviews I did at FUNARI, I was able to make sure that the environment was one that was not disturbing and tranquil. However, this was different when conducting an interview at an interviewee’s home. I did not have control on where to do the interview, but the interviewee did. Overall, I paid attention that wherever we sat, the participant felt comfortable to speak up. Up to now I was able to do half of the interviews; the respondents represent all selected categories.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis I used for this research is the thematic analysis. This analysis according to 't Hart (2005) is the processing of data to results and conclusions. Researchers do this by looking for themes which in a qualitative vocabulary is also called 'categories' (p.276). I first made a summary of all the data by listening to the recordings. Based on the recordings and my note taking I started summarizing and coding the responses and looking for patterns that came up and started highlighting the emerging themes. I also made use of lots of quotes from the interviews.

### **Preliminary Findings**

The preliminary findings are based on six of the 12 interviews. The selected categories are represented in all six interviews.

I will answer all three of my sub questions and subsequently my main research question:

#### *1. To what extent is there accessibility to public spaces in Aruba for persons with disability in mobility?*

Each participant graded the accessibility in Aruba, for persons who have a physical disability and need to be in a wheelchair, where zero is not accessible and ten being very accessible. All six interviewees graded the accessibility in Aruba below a five. The lowest grade being "0,000". The highest grade that Aruba got so far is a "4". The participants all shared the similar opinions about Aruba. One participant said "Aruba is niet geschikt voor rolstoel gebruiker in de openbaar". Another said "Algemeen slecht." This findings connects to the theory of Coate (2014) who explains that "to a disturbing degree, barriers in the built environment can prevent people with physical disabilities from visiting social, commercial, and recreational establishments for fear of not feeling safe or able to enter a facility that is equipped with stairs, narrow doorways, inaccessible bathrooms, and numerous other unforeseen, potentially hazardous architectural barriers" (p.2).

The participants also had a tendency to link this question to how people treat them. One participant stated: "People have no respect for handicaps and maybe it's because they don't know better or they don't know what it is really, because I didn't know before I became a handicap, I didn't know what it was either." This participant explained how many places claim to be wheelchair accessible, but when she gets there, it is not adequately accessible for her. She stated "if they're going to make anything wheelchair accessible, I think they should ask the people who are in a wheelchair on how to do it."

#### *2. To what extent can persons with a disability in mobility in Aruba achieve independence?*

Stoker, Turnbull and Wyn (2013) state that the CRPD emphasizes that independence for persons with disabilities should include individual autonomy, the opportunity to be actively involved in the decision making process, and the opportunity to access the physical, social, economic, and cultural environment This theory is used as base for this question.

#### *- Individual autonomy:*

Most persons interviewed expressed not to have individual autonomy and will not be able to achieve individual autonomy due to their disabilities. They need to rely on family members to do daily tasks such as cook, bathe, go to the bathroom, change, and move around. Those who have an electric wheelchair have a higher individual autonomy than those who do not. They are able to move around on their own to some extent. However, having an electric wheelchair is based on the financial situation of the family and if the disability of the persons concerned allows them the possibility of using an electric wheelchair. Persons who had become physically disabled on a later age showed more sadness when talking about the loss of their individual autonomy. One participant used the word "demoralizing." Persons who had become physically disabled from childhood spoke about their individual autonomy very casually. They expressed how it was annoying to constantly ask for help, however, not how does that make them feel.

*- The opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making processes:*

Most participants answered that they do decide what to do with their day. However, it mostly involves things they can do at home. If they want to go outside of their home, it involves some kind of organization and cooperation with family members. Most of the interviewees depend on family members to transport them around, due to the fact that Aruba does not have affordable public transportation for persons who may need to make use of a wheelchair.

*- The opportunity to access the physical, social, economic, and cultural environment:*

*Physical Environment in General*

All the participants stated that there are not many places that they can go with a wheelchair. One participant stated “Mayoria lugar na Aruba no ta tene cuenta cu rolstoel di hende. Sea nan no tin e step cu por subi of e porta di e negoshi ta chikito.” (Translation: Most places in Aruba do not take wheelchairs into account. Either there isn’t a ramp or the door of such company is too small.) A participant mentioned that he has not been to the main street of Oranjestad for 6 years. The last time he went was in 2010. He shared how he could not get into many of the stores and how the stores that he could get into, whoever was pushing him, needed to “hop” the wheelchair over the bump that was at the entrance.

*Schools*

Participants that had a physical disability and went to school shared that the school cooperated with their limitation. One participant states for example that he needed to notify the school upfront that he will be coming in a wheelchair, and that is when the school made changes to accommodate him. The school also created a special bathroom for him. However, he also shared that a lot of the times the classes were on the second floor and there was no way he could go upstairs because there was no elevator. He felt like it was an inconvenience to ask to put classes on the first floor. Even with having classes on the first floor his mother needed to walk

around with a special ramp in order to get over the bumps. When he was in VWO 5 the school finally decided on a more appropriate solution, which was to allocate one classroom for his classes for the whole entire year and let the teachers come to the class instead of the class having to constantly go from one classroom to another. After graduating from VWO, one of the reasons he did not continue his study was because of the lack of accessibility of University of Aruba.

Another participant who loved going to several lectures at the University of Aruba, shared her experience of how she wanted to go to a lecture after she became physically disabled and when she reached the University, she realized that she would not be able to go up the steps of the Aula, and decided to go home. She has not been to another lecture again.

*Doctor’s offices*

Most of the participants stated that their house doctor’s office is not wheelchair accessible. One participant said that in order to go into the office of her house doctor she needed to pass through the back door because the front door had stairs. They then made a ramp, but the ramp was so steep that not even her father could push her up. Another participant stated that the doctor needs to come to his house, because he is unable to go to the doctor’s office. He said: “e fastioso ta ora nan mester bin ta depende riba nan tempo...” “Bo no por bisa nan nada paso ta un favor nan ta hasibo.” (Translation: The annoying thing is that when they need to come, it depends on their [the doctors] time... You can’t tell them anything, because they are doing you a favor)

*Transportation*

One participant I interviewed has been in a wheelchair from his twenties. He studied in the Netherlands and was able to get a job there. In the Netherlands he had an adjusted minibus that he was able to drive with his hands, since he is unable to use his legs. He stated that in Aruba “aangepast

openbaar vervoer onbetaalbaar is.” (Translation: modified public transportation is unpayable) Similarly, all the other participants shared the same view on transportation. Most rely on their parents, relatives or children for transportation. Persons with electric wheelchairs need a minibus with a lift. When asked about Lite Life Medicab, which is a transportation company that provides non-emergency transportation for persons with a disability, most of the participants stated that it is too expensive. “Super duur”, “mucho caro”, (Translation: expensive) “hopi caro.” (Translation: very expensive)

#### *Social Environment*

Most persons answered that there are not many places they can go. A lot of them mentioned they are able to go to the movies. However, they always take into consideration that they must go early in order to get the back seat. Respondents who attend Funari go there so that they do not stay at home doing nothing. One participant shared how she is socially isolated at home and that is why she decided to go to Funari. After her first day there she said “I never knew there were so many people who are also in a wheelchair.”

#### *Economic Environment*

Most of the participants do not have a job or are unable to work. They receive financial aid from the government, but they mention that that aid is barely enough to survive on. When talking about finances, there was a difference between the age groups. Persons from the age group of 18 to 34 years were not very concerned about financial things. These participants are living with their parents and have never experienced an independent life due to having a physical disability as a young age. Whereas participants who became physically disabled at an older age have children, worked and are married. They had the opportunity to be independent and receive an income. Some still get paid by the government, others are on their pension. Instead of relying on their parents as the younger participants do, they now rely on their spouse

or children. One participant with the age of 56 years stated that she would never be able to work again. Her response was “Ken lo empleami? Ken kier un hende cu limitacion?” (Translation: Who will give me a job? Who wants somebody with a limitation?)

#### *3. What is the emotional impact of persons with physical disability in relation to the accessibility to public spaces in Aruba?*

When studying the emotional impact of persons with a disability in mobility I used the definition well-being as proposed by Michaelson, et al (2009), “the science of ‘subjective well-being’ suggests that as well as experiencing good feelings, people need: a sense of individual vitality; to undertake activities which are meaningful, engaging, and which make them feel competent and autonomous; and a stock of inner resources to help them cope when things go wrong and be resilient to changes beyond their immediate control. It is also crucial that people feel a sense of relatedness to other people, so that in addition to the personal, internally focused elements, people’s social experiences – the degree to which they have supportive relationships and a sense of connection with others – form a vital aspect of well-being” (p.9).

One feeling that emerged in almost all interviews was the feeling of frustration and anger due to constantly being left out, or not being able to do something because their wheelchair would not be able to pass through. The frustration of constantly needing to think ahead before going out to a place, or needing constant help to get over bumps and steps. One participant got very emotional when asked how she feels. Her reply was “dat je niet mee telt, not important.” (Translation: that you are not included, not important) One participant feels nervous when going out in public, because she knows it will be a hassle. She feels like it is a lot of work, from to point of getting herself and the wheelchair in the car to the point of finding an adequate parking place big enough to be able

to get out of the car and close enough to the place that her family members would not need to push her very far. Other feelings that emerged specifically from respondents from the age group of 18 to 34 year were the feeling of wishing to be able to go anywhere they wanted to, similar to other people of their age.

## Conclusions

The main research question of this research was:

*How does accessibility to public spaces impact the emotional well-being and independence of persons with a disability in mobility?*

The preliminary findings show that the inability to access public spaces had a huge impact on the emotional well-being and independence of persons with a disability. Due to the lack of accessibility in Aruba, the participants had all experienced the frustration of not being able to participate in certain events, or gaining access to services or buildings. Some of the participants felt unsafe, therefore, avoided going out in public. Other common feelings of the participants, are the feelings of constantly being excluded. Participants who found pleasure and worth in working, are not able to work anymore, which causes them to feel useless. In situations where persons with a disability in mobility do go out in public, they shared feelings of being disrespected by other persons, people do not know how to behave around them, and are often greeted with many stares. Thus, when comparing these feelings to the definition of well-being as proposed by Michaelson, et al (2009), we can conclude that these feelings experienced by the participants are mostly feelings of frustration and anger due to being excluded from society by not being able to go places in order to socialize, educate themselves and/or earn an income. They are not able to participate in activities that are meaningful, such as working, going shopping, or even visiting their doctor's offices. Additionally, the participants have been through many negative social experiences.

As a result, persons who have a disability in mobility were not able to attain full independence. All participants are not able to attain individual autonomy due to their specific disability. However, when looking at their opportunity to access the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, the focus must shift away from the person and their disability. In this context the disability of the person is not their limitation, but rather the interaction between the person and the society. This perspective is called the Social Model of Disability, which according to Scottish Accessible Information Forum (2009), focuses on the barriers that are in the society and how these barriers are the cause of the disability of the person and which leads to their isolation and oppression.

If the society becomes accessible to persons with a disability in mobility, they would not only have the freedom to choose what they want to do but also have the opportunity to enhance their capabilities. Persons with a disability in mobility will be able to enhance their capabilities by having access to schools, or by attending public lectures and workshops. They would be able to participate in activities that make them feel valuable. This ideal situation can be linked to the Human Capabilities Approach developed by Amartya Sen. According to Unterhalter, Vaughan and Walker (2007), the main focus of the capability approach is that the social structure should fixate on expanding the capabilities of persons and be able to lead a valuable life. The accessibility to public spaces will not only enhance the capabilities of persons with a disability in mobility, but also ensure that their rights as a person are being met. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities include rights such as right to equality and non-discrimination (article 5), the right to accessibility (article 9), the right to living independently and being included in the community (article 19), the right to personal mobility (article 20), the right to adequate standard of living and social protection (article 28), and participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports (article 30) (United Nations, 2006).



## **Recommendations**

In order to increase the emotional well-being amongst persons with a disability in mobility, importance must be given to social inclusion. Social inclusion will guarantee the active participation of everyone in the community without discriminating anybody (Schirmer & Michailakis, 2015). However, for social inclusion to happen, it would be recommendable to bring awareness to the community about the importance of social inclusion. Bringing awareness to this issue can lead to a personal campaign for more accessibility in Aruba. If people are more aware of the lack of accessibility, they can start bringing a change at their own company or workplace. This change can start small, such as by providing adequate ramps and parking places. Other recommendations involve developing regulations and policies that ensure the accessibility to people with a disability in mobility by meeting specific accessibility requirements when building a public space.



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Dahariana Evertsz, University of Aruba

## **Research in Paradise**

Studying for a bachelor's degree in Aruba sometimes feels quite uncommon. Most students once they are done with their Havo/Vwo find the first flight out of here. For me I wanted to test out what this little island had to offer more than tourism and white sandy beaches. I wanted to see how the community lives, how they work and what would become of them as they grow older. Doing my final research at Directie Volksgezondheid was the perfect place to interact with all the institutions that provide services to the aging population of Aruba and being a part of the UAUCU program was ideal for peer to peer support and our mutual well-being. During the three month journey we interacted and listened to each other's success and struggles, showed support when called for and gave space when a team mate needed to breathe.

This little island would not have this contagious warmth and caring towards each other atmosphere if it weren't for

its people. The different cultures and their values mesh well together and brings this community colorfully forward with tones of different backgrounds. The heritage that once ran the community to where it is now is slowly becoming its main source of cultural survival. As I visited the elderly homes within the community, I see that it is this same group of people that are the ones we need to be thankful for where we are now. The little Aruba is thankful to all the aging population and especially the elderly living in their homes and in elderly care facilities. From one little story about how to cook the best "Kolo Stoba" to the story about how the neighbor went insane and being told "Ki hende sa di Lago hobencita!!" The elderly have by far the best stories to share, the warmest hugs to give, the brightest eyes once they see you coming, and the best old fashioned compliments that are engraved in your brain and continues to put a smile on your face.

# **A situational Analysis of the relevant welfare services and social security programs for the older population of Aruba,**

## **Implications for policy**

By Dahariana Evertsz

### **Acknowledgement**

My fourth year as a Social Work and Development student in pursuit of my bachelor degree could not have been possible without the constant support and assistance of many individuals in the field. I thank my Work Field Instructor (WFI) and Lecturer Ms. Clementia Eugene who has shown me throughout all these years the importance in fighting for the rights of others. Her role as an educator at the University of Aruba has been tremendous and provided me with numerous inspirations throughout the years.

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To my Research Coach Mr. Wilbert Marchena, who is the only gerontologist in Aruba has guided me throughout many cases and provided effective guidelines in the best practices

for the Social Work in Development. Mr. Marchena has a passion for policies and works with a powerful speed in following ethics regarding his field. One can never be too careful and he has proven how easy it is to follow the rules and always be victorious.

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

#### **1.1 General Introduction**

In almost every country in the world, the proportion of people aged over 60 years is growing faster than any other age group, as a result of both longer life expectancy and declining fertility rates. This population ageing can be seen as a success story for public health policies and for socioeconomic development, but it also challenges society to adapt, in order to maximize the health and functional capacity of older people as well as their social participation and security. According to the World Health Organization “People worldwide are living longer”; today, for the first time in history, most people can expect to live into their sixties and beyond. By 2050, the world’s population aged 60 years and older is expected to total 2 billion, up from 900 million in 2015. Today, 125 million people are aged 80 years or older. By 2050, there will be almost this many (120 million) living in China alone, and 434 million people in this age group worldwide. By 2050, 80% of all older people will live in low- and middle-income countries.” (WHO,

September 2015)

During the months of February to May 2016 I had the pleasure to conduct a situational analysis on the aging population on Aruba. For this research current available data was collected to be analyzed and used as relevant information to provide assistance to Directie Volksgezondheid's Dienst Ouderenzorg in their work to set a standard of best quality of care for the aging population and its service providers.

**1.2 Problem statement**

The aging population of Aruba has increased with a high percentage since 2000. As people age, their health needs tend to become more complex with a general trend towards declining capacity and the increased likelihood of having one or more chronic diseases. Health services are often designed to cure acute conditions or symptoms and tend to manage health issues in disconnected and fragmented ways, which lack coordination across care providers, settings and time.

Health systems need to be transformed so that they can ensure affordable access to evidence based medical

interventions that respond to the needs of older people and can help prevent care dependency later in life. According to the United Nations Principles of Older Persons report in 2013 on World Population Ageing “ The global share of older people (aged 60 years or over) increased from 9.2 per cent in 1990 to 11.7 per cent in 2013 and will continue to grow as a proportion of the world population, reaching 21.1 per cent by 2050”. This would mean that globally the number of older persons (aged 60 years or over) is expected to more than double, from the 841 million provided in the report it would reach about 2 billion older persons in 2050. Older persons would have exceeded the amount of children all around the world.

The United Nations reports that the major areas of the world are at different stages of the demographic transition. In an assessment of global trends in population ageing, the Caribbean (table 1) has been placed in the second stage and the view is that because the region has experienced, on average, fairly rapid fertility declines, the populations are expected to age more rapidly than those of Europe and North America (now in the third stage), did, in the past (United Nations, 2005).

**Table 1: Latin America and the Caribbean:  
Life Expectancy at Birth by Gender and Infant Mortality Rate, 1950–2025**

Five-year Period	Life Expectancy (in years)			Infant Mortality (per 1,000 births)
	Total	Men	Women	
1950–55	51.8	50.1	53.5	127.7
1970–75	61.2	58.9	63.6	81.5
1990–95	69.1	65.9	72.5	38.3
2000–05	72.2	69.1	75.4	25.6
2005–10	73.4	70.4	76.6	21.7
2010–15	74.5	71.4	77.7	18.6
2020–25	76.3	73.3	79.5	13.8

Source: CELADE/ECLAC population estimates and projections, 2007.

In Aruba we see the same decrease in fertility rates and increase in the aging process. “Aging is more than a matter of numbers. Older people have more complex illnesses. They have different medical needs than younger adults, and they present unique healthcare challenges”.

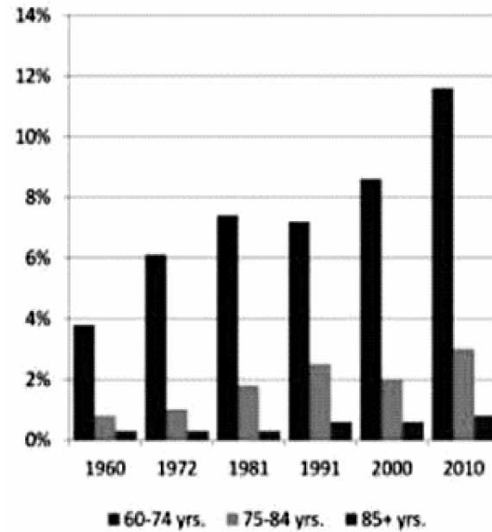
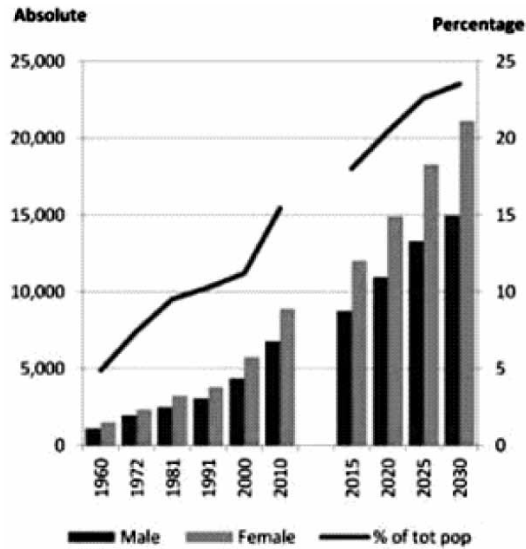


Table 2: Absolute and relative number of the elderly population

Table 3: Elderly subgroups as a percentage of the total population

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	% of pop.	No.	% of pop.	No.	% of pop.
1960	1,114	2.1	1,490	2.8	2,604	4.9
1972	1,962	3.4	2,339	4.0	4,301	7.4
1981	2,504	4.2	3,240	5.4	5,744	9.5
1991	3,046	4.6	3,799	5.7	6,845	10.3
2001	4,357	4.8	5,740	6.4	10,097	11.2
2006	4,922	5.3	6,656	7.1	11,578	12.4
2011	5,834	6.1	7,984	8.4	13,818	14.5
2016	7,070	7.3	9,772	10.1	16,842	17.4

Table 4: The absolute and relative number of individual 60+ by year and sex

The amount of individuals above the age of 60 has been increasing with big numbers of the past years, and this will not slow down. Not only are individuals becoming older but the older are living longer after they have reached the age of pension. It is the responsibility to make sure that these individuals receive the proper care and assistance to remain active members within our society. To provide them with basic tools that would help them stay in touch with themselves and others within their family unit.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. Based on available secondary data, describe the aging process and examine the state of health, welfare and wellbeing of the older population in Aruba.
2. To examine and map relevant policies, programs and services available for older persons in Aruba.

### 1.4 Operational definitions of variables

The variables in this research would be;

1. Welfare systems
2. Policy
3. Social security
4. Elderly population of Aruba

### 1.5 Research questions

The research questions on this subject were based on the necessity to bring forth answers on the topic for Dienst Ouderenzorg of the Directie Volksgezondheid.

#### Main research question

- What is the state of the institutional support and services to the elderly in Aruba?

#### Sub questions

- What are the potentials and gaps in the aged care and service system?
- What are the policy implications?

### 1.6 Relevance of the study

To provide key stakeholders an updated overview of the care, support and services available to the older population in Aruba. Doing research is an ethical responsibility of a social worker. According to the NASW (5.02), (b) “Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.” Improving the quality of service is one of the six core values of social work and that services can only improve when supported by research. “Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).” (NASW)

In the context of the Aruban community this research is to provide key stakeholders an updated overview of the care, support and services available to the older population in Aruba

## Chapter II: Theoretical and Contextual Analysis

### 2.1 United Nations rights based perspective

Rights based approach; “appreciating the contribution that older persons make to their societies, Recognizing that, in the Charter of the United Nations, the peoples of the United Nations declare, inter alia, their determination to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom” (UN, 2009). And with that in mind the United Nations encourages governments to incorporate principles within their policies to protect and empower the older demographic in their countries. The five principles are;

1. Independence
2. Participation
3. Care

4. Self-fulfillment
5. Dignity

### **The independence**

The Independence speaks of the older person's right to have access to adequate food, shelter, water, income, and the basic human needs in a safe environment. The opportunity to work creates in dependence of the older persons till the estimated age stipulated by the countries law, access to appropriate educational and training programs to lead an active aging process. And the older person should have the right to reside at home for as long as possible within the care of the family, and love ones.

### **The Participation**

The Participation speaks of the right to participation of the older person within society. Their role within society and being active may bring about knowledge in how they view policy and how these can affect the older persons. They have the right to form part of or initiative organizations and movements within the community to fight for better quality of care of services.

### **Care**

The right to care gives the older person right to social, political, financial and health care in how it is related to their society. The older person has the right to legal care to raise their autonomy and the right to institutional care for the mental and social needs. The older person has the right to receive dignified quality care while residing in elderly homes, and this should never limit them in following their beliefs.

### **Self- fulfillment**

Self-fulfillment rights means that the older person has the right to become self-actualized, to have access to any resource relating to their political, cultural, educational, recreational, and social development.

### **Dignity**

Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation and live life without fear of exploitation, abuse and neglect.

### **2.2 Human Capability Approach**

The capability approach is a broad normative framework for the evaluation of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies and proposals about social change in society. The capability approach is used in a wide range of fields, most prominently in development thinking, welfare economics, social policy and political philosophy (Fukuda-Parr and Kumar 2003).

### **2.3 Strengths based perspective**

Strengths-based perspective sees strengths in two distinct ways. First, the resources and the ability to use these resources in helping an individual to continue to develop. Accordingly, strengths are used to create quality service, policy plans and programs to assist the participant's development. Second, some strength can be developed or enhanced. In the case of the participant strength within the context of each country differs in the availability of various resources, and the abilities of each individual can be viewed as a service delivery outcome. According to the 2012 article "Strengths-based approach to social work practice with older persons" "In working with older persons, the strengths-based approaches can prove to be extremely useful in view of the fact that most elderly have an enormous repertoire of knowledge, practice wisdom and a wide range of skill sets and by and large, helping professionals approach the whole issue of working with the elderly from a perspective of dealing with dependency and burden of care associated with it." (Ponnuswami, Ilango, Francis, Abraham, and Udhayakumar, P.2012) In the Social Work practice, in order to work effectively toward a goal there is a need to be working based on the standpoint of strengths-based approach rather than a simple model of caregiving. Aruba sees that there is a strong emphasis of the older



persons being a growing source adamant to better care. There are various international bodies such as the United Nations have been advocating this paradigm shift among all stakeholders including the participants themselves to aim for better quality and better care for older persons.

#### **2.4 Productive and Successful aging**

According to Caro, Bass, and Chen defined productive aging to be “any activity by an older individual that contributes to producing goods or services, or develops the capacity to produce them (whether or not the individual is paid for this activity).” (1993) While successful aging is multidimensional, encompassing the avoidance of disease and disability as the participants ages, the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function, and sustained engagement in social and productive activities in their home or community.

#### **2.5 Global perspectives**

Older persons’ numbers are increasing rapidly. One out of every ten persons is now 60 years or above; by 2050, one out of five will be 60 years or older. UN Member States correctly see this growth among the elderly as a tremendous economic and social challenge for their countries and the world. At the same time, governments agree with Global Action on Aging that the world’s elderly offer great talent and energy to their nations and our world. Global Action on Aging advocates at the United Nations (UN) in New York to build a better society for older people across the globe. (UN, 2013)

In April 2002, delegates of 160 governments, intergovernmental institutions and NGOs came together at the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, Spain, in order to revise the 1982 Vienna Plan on Ageing which had established a global long-term strategy for the aging population.

According to the 2002 Assembly’s outcome document, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)

commits governments to integrate the rights and needs of older persons into national, as well as international, economic and social development policies. However, this MIPAA document is non-binding and UN Member States may choose to implement the Plan or not. Many millions of vulnerable old people, in both the developed and developing world, still experience abuse, poverty and social exclusion today. The rights of older people need to be better defined and protected. Global Action on Aging believes that an Aging Human Rights Convention (or Treaty), if adopted, promises a better world for older persons. (UN, 2013).

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This situational analysis for the Directie Volksgezondheids department of Ouderenzorg is a Qualitative Research aimed to provide readers with the information of the current services and service providers working with the elderly population of Aruba. For this research data collection will start with the following:

1. Desk Research  
With the desk research I will be completing a systematic review which is a type of literature review to collect and critically analyze the multiple research studies and papers about this topic.
2. Structured interviews with key stakeholders  
By interviewing key stakeholders I would have a view on where the government and institutions vision the development for the aging are aimed.
3. Observation during visitations in all Governmental, and private Elderly Homes  
The observation during the visitations will be the first round to collect basic data of each home to create a basic Sociale Kaart for the Dienst Ouderenzorg.

#### **3.2 Unit of Analysis**

The observation visitation and interviewing of management of each elderly homes such as Stichting Algemene



Bejaardenzorg Aruba (SABA) or private homes such as Cas di Cuido Oasis. The interviewing of the director of the health care service providers for older participants at home such as; Stichting voor Volkshygiene van het Wit Gele Kruis Aruba (WGK).

The key informant interviews would be major stakeholders and will be interview in regards to their work with older persons in Aruba.

### 3.2.1 Homes

Public SABA was founded in 1972 as a retirement home. As time went on, there were different (social) developments. These developments had their impact on the clients of SABA. SABA grew slowly to the function of nursing care. It is known that the need for nursing homecare will rise in the coming years.

A look at the current situation SABA has four homes under its management.

- SABA; Centro di Cuido (San Nicolas is a large complex of small group homes.)
- SABA; Huize Mari Stella (located in Saveneta has 17 houses for occupancy of 34 more residents. (sheltered care)
- SABA; San Pedro Paviljoen
- SABA; ST. Micheal Paviljoen

SABA is Aruba's largest provider of care for destitute elderly. A total care provided to 255 residents. Through a recognized quality system SABA tries to continuously improve the care. Over half of our residents have a dementia. The plan is designed to maximize the care for the residents in which autonomy and free will of the people is leading. Characteristic of our concern is regularly held MDO (multidisciplinary meetings). Participants here are: nursing, physician, psychologist, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. After the MDO is a family interview. Each location has an activities director who pays attention to the individual filling of daytime activities. Joint activities were organized, usually by somatic residents attended.

Private Elderly Care homes offer a smaller, more home-like family setting for seniors. Care homes offer food services and assistance with daily living, but do not typically have a medical professional on-site. They offer a limited medical care, but it's not a primary focus of this type of elderly care living. Private elderly care homes are typically located in traditional homes and neighborhoods and provide care for fewer older participants than the SABA living communities. It is uncommon for a care home to offer services for more than 15 seniors; which help create the more personal, home-style living environment.

The current private Elderly homes provided to the older participants in Aruba are;

- Betesda Home Care
- Cas di Cuido Oasis
- Cas di Cuido y Alegria pa Grandinan
- Hope Foundation
- Paraiso de Rosas
- Stichting Cas Cristelle
- Stichting Cas di Machi
- Stichting Cas Marizul
- Stichting Thuiszorg

### 3.2.2 Service providers

Aruba has many different health care providers for the older persons within the community of Aruba. The services are not always covered by the public insurance Algemene Ziektekosten Verzekering (AZV) which may lead to extra cost for the older participants and their families. Therefore, there are many service providers work closely with the AZV Aruba to accommodate each individual participant case in their outmost best services regardless of cost. One example of such health care services provider is the Stichting voor Volkshygiene van Het Wit Gele Kruis Aruba (WGK).

The WGK is currently providing a service to the older persons of Aruba the Community care. The aim of community care is to care for people in their own environment. Many people can no longer fully care for themselves or need assistance with daily care. The community care therefore provides the

following services: home care, diabetes care, wound care, education and preventive care.

### 3.2.3 Major stakeholders

The major stakeholders I will be interviewing are as follow; The Minister of Health Dr. Alex Schwengle Advisor Mr. Alwin Bolwerk, Jerry Staring as the Director of Directie Volksgezondheid (DVG), the Director of Saba Dhr.R.Kock or Board director Dhr. J.R.Tchong, Head of Ouderenzorg in Directie Sociale Zaken is Wilbert G. Marchena or Section Senior Franklin A.G Ridderstaat.

### 3.4 Data Collection

The desk research is the collection literature that will be included for secondary data in the history and situation analysis will consist of;

For the collection of past and future statistics on the aging population

- Balkestein, M. J. (22.04011). Central Bureau of Statistics. Special issue on Aruba's Aging population.
- Census 2010 paper. Aging in Aruba: Challenges for a sustainable society. Census Central Bureau of Statistics.
- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2011). Statistical Orientation. Annual, 2011.

For the declarations of the human rights and the rights of the older persons;

- Draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Older Persons, 3 June 2009. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Older Persons.
- Global action on aging, draft Convention on the rights for older persons.
- United Nations Principles of Older Persons
- Onazi, O. (2013). Human rights from community: A rights-based approach to development.

Data and research done with the past regarding the older persons;

- National Association of Social Workers. (1999). Code

of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

- Santkasing, G. (2011). Een Goded Oude Dag Destem Van de Zestigplusser op Aruba. Caribbean Reality studies.
- The Well being Survey, 2009, Aruba.
- The Human Development Report, 2015 ([http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015\\_human\\_development\\_report.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf))

### 3.5 Data Analysis

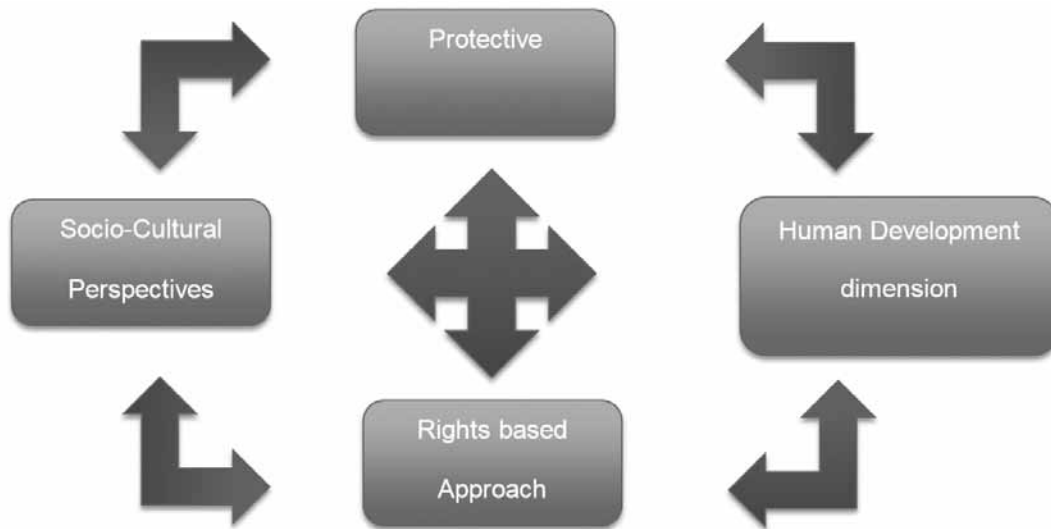
After collecting the literature according to themes related to health and aging such as (general health, mental health, physical health, access to health care, nutrition and diet, diseases, etc.) I will analyze and review all the information one by one. With the researches done in this field I can analyze and provide an accurate view on all the services that can be provided to the older persons in Aruba. From the discussions I can compare both data and provide a recommendation for the services that the participants can receive.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the collection of the data as a Social Work student in training the code of ethics will be the bible through the process. The collection of the data will be done with a signed consent form from all participants of the research. They will be informing of the motive for the research and the consent form will be provided in Papiamentu.

## Chapter IV: Key Findings

This chapter will contain the research findings, structured in an adaptation of the OECD (2001) guidelines poverty reduction framework.



*Source: OECD, DAC guidelines poverty reduction (2001) (edited)*

## Chapter V: Discussion

The amount of individuals above the age of 60 has been increasing with big numbers of the past years, and this will not slow down. Not only are individuals becoming older but the older are living longer after they have reached the age of pension. It is a responsibility to make sure that these individuals receive the proper care and assistance to remain active members within our society, to provide them with basic tools that would help them stay in touch with themselves and others within their family unit.

## Chapter VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a current policy that has not been implemented as yet in Aruba, this policy has brought forth the opportunity for the elderly homes to provide higher standards of quality for their participants. Most homes will have to invest in the education of their employees and management in order to further develop with the new regulations that the policy will bring with its implementation. One possible solution for the costly investment the homes is the creation of a special fund focused on gerontology, elderly cognitive education, productive aging and understanding and respect towards the principles of the elderly.

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Nurianna Dhalía Arias, University of Aruba

As the exchange program kicked off I saw enough time ahead of us. At the beginning of this program it felt as if time was not going too fast neither too slow. After the first weeks of the program time started passing by full speed.

As I reflect on this learning experience there is a lot I have learned and there are still exciting voyages to experience after this student research exchange. I had difficulties trying to identify what I have really learned. Then, I realized that this program was not just a learning experience; it was much more than that. What is special about the 'learning experience' is that I have not experienced any moments in which I say "I wish this has happened differently". On the contrary, as a senior student, the exchange program was something I would definitely do over again if I had the opportunity to do so. The best part of this exchange program has been being able to have support from co-students. The support of the students is especially special because they are going through the same and understand your struggles as

a student. I managed to keep my ideas, thoughts, aims and ambitions central and focused. This is the best that I take away from this exchange.

Additionally, I thought that meeting students that live in a complete other context would create a dynamic of many differences which was fascinating when imagined it. This was not the case; it was not as I imagined it. Even though the dynamic was not as I thought it would be I really enjoyed that all the students had a lot of characteristics and ideas in common. This is something a fully embraced. I truly appreciate of this program that we were able to identify ourselves with other students and that I felt that I was supported. Even though the areas of research were diverse we could identify ourselves well with the students, peer to peer. The diversity of the areas of research helped me open my horizons even though I was researching in an area that is completely opposite. It made me find the interconnectedness and interrelations of different disciplines that prevail around my topic, which is in the area of health care development. This also helped me focus better on my main research aim and to distinguish the most important aspects of my research from the additional aspects of my research.

As this small reflection comes to an end so thus this program. Lessons that I have learned in this program are tools I will be using in the future for yet unknown endeavors. After all, there is something I wish went differently. I wish time did not pass by so fast.

*"Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely."  
- Augustine Rodin*

# Diabetes Management in a Changing Society

## Associating forces to create more sustainable collaborations

Nurianne Dhalía Arias

### Introduction

Diabetes has been an alarming health issue for many years. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that people living with diabetes will surge from 382 million to 697 million people by 2035 (International Diabetes Federation, 2015). Unfortunately, Aruba is not an exception when one refers to dealing with the 'diabetes phenomena'. According to recent data, 12 in 1000 adults between the age of 20 and 79 living in Aruba have diagnosed diabetes mellitus. In other words, one in six adults has diabetes. The national prevalence of diabetes is 16.2% (International Diabetes Federation, 2015).

Diabetes mellitus, better known as diabetes is a chronic disease, thus it is a lifelong condition. One is diabetic when one's body cannot either produce enough insulin, the body cannot effectively use insulin (insulin resistance) or one cannot effectively produce insulin. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar in the body. Hyperglycemia, better known as raised or high blood sugar is, a common effect or consequence of uncontrolled or inappropriate treatment of diabetes. Inappropriate or lack of treatment of diabetes may lead to among other kidney failure, heart failure, blindness or nerve damage (International Diabetes Federation, 2015).

There are two types of diabetes. The impressive detection or diagnosis of the cause of diabetes type 1 occurred in

Toronto at the International Diabetes Federation World Diabetes Congress in 1922 (International Diabetes Federation, 2015). Scientists discovered that this particular type of diabetes arises from a deficiency of insulin. Insulin is a hormone produced in the pancreas and can be developed mostly hereditary genetically. During the annual international congress in November in Canada, the participants were able to find a rich assortment of training along with clinical science lectures, expert sessions, symposia and latest information on scientific and treatment advances. In coincidence with the National Plan of Aruba (Special Committee on Obesity, 2008), the IDF Congress 2015 planned on drawing more attention and focusing on the emerging importance of obesity (management) and its complications and its relation to type 2 diabetes. Individuals with type 2 diabetes have difficulties with the proper absorption of insulin in their body because of bad eating habits and or lifestyle. Overweight and or obesity also increase the risk to develop type 2 diabetes. The efficacy and safety of new therapies that target glucose and body weight, principally the GLP-1 receptor agonists and the SGLT2 inhibitors will be reviewed. This is done with special attention to appraising the risk: benefit ratio for individuals living with type 2 diabetes (Special Committee on Obesity, 2008). Moreover, Drucker (2015), states that many of the recent advances of diabetes have stemmed from the application of new technologies.

## Research Objective

As mentioned in the National Plan of Aruba 2009-2018, the prevalence of obesity and overweight has grown dramatically in adults and children as well. The plan aimed at raising awareness on how important a healthy lifestyle is for one's health in general and to hopefully have an influence on the individuals behavior regarding healthy lifestyles (Special Committee on Obesity, 2008). This thesis focuses on how actors in the public health of Aruba can collaborate to contribute to a more effective approach for diabetes management on the island. This includes primary prevention for the whole community as well as secondary prevention for at risk patients and diagnosed patients (Wong et al., 2002). The motive for researching this topic is that according to International Diabetes Federation 1 of the 2 diabetic persons are not aware of their condition, which can lead to bodily failures and further complications (International Diabetes Federation, 2015).

## Research questions

The main topic of this paper is diabetes management in Aruba. The research is specifically directed towards how diabetes management has been in the past in the local context, how diabetes is being currently managed internationally and locally, and what possible new and innovative approaches could be designed and structurally implemented for diabetes management in Aruba. The more time diabetics remain untreated, the bigger the chance to experience critical health conditions in the future. Therefore, the development of the disease should be prevented or treated from the beginning. I would like to find out what are success factors and barriers in the actual programs globally and locally, and what approaches are appropriate and convenient to ensure that programs of diabetes are successful and reach out to achieve the proposed goals. In order to achieve these goals the following central research question was formulated to steer this research:

*What are achievable and innovative approaches for successful and strategic management of diabetes in Aruba?*

The following sub-questions were formulated in order to adequately answer and support the main research question.

1. *Which approaches have been exercised in the past on diabetes management in Aruba, and what where the barriers and key factors for success in these approaches?*
2. *What modern approaches are currently being exercised in the global and local context of diabetes management?*
3. *What are success factors and barriers of diabetes management?*
4. *What are achievable new approaches for diabetes management in Aruba?*

The relevance of this research is that it adds knowledge on approaches, strategies and systems that are currently being used in big communities internationally socially as well as scientifically. This research will contribute to the insights on diabetes management by giving conclusions and recommendations based on insights of the international and local context. Moreover, it will give an overview of barriers and success factors on diabetes management in Aruba, in the past and present. These insights can contribute to relevant policies and collaboration initiatives on sustainable diabetes management in Aruba.

## Literature review and Theoretical Model

Based on the research on practices around the world, key factors have been defined out of consequent approaches that have been recognized from the programs and strategies that were studied through the theoretical research.

### *Nature of the policy/program*

Internationally there are countries focusing on prevention on the primary level, other countries are focusing on the secondary level, while others focusing on both levels. Each program has a certain and specific purpose. This entails focusing on defined goals for specific target groups or



patient groups. As explained before, Wong et al., (2002), developed a conceptual model that defined different levels of prevention and diabetes treatment. The primary prevention programs and secondary prevention programs are developed differently, by different groups of individuals and for different target groups. For example, primary prevention programs are organized to raise awareness for the whole community thus, for patients and non patients. Secondary prevention programs are organized for at risk individuals and patients thus, most likely medical professional develop and execute these programs with the patients. Secondary prevention programs tend to be structured and standard requisites patients should comply with unlike primary prevention.

*Policy/program development and implementation approach*

Pressman and Wildavsky, the authors of the book *Implementation* (1992), pointed out that the approach of a policy by means of or as a program is essential and in some cases determinant for the success of it. The authors explain three policy implementation approaches namely, policy as control, policy as evolution and policy as interaction.

Implementation of a policy as control contains the idea of making correct deductions from firmly established principles thus, it contain strict instructions of implementation. It specifically describes a planning and design that explains what is supposed to be, what will be. This description includes specific goals, plans and tight controls and incentives. It contains in detail ranking of objectives, with alternatives to take in to consideration and criteria to choose among them. Whenever conditions change, planning and control must also change (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1992). This policy implementation type clearly states goals, has detailed plans and tight controls and incentives however, eaves out the detours, blind alleys, the tight and loose constraints.

Implementation of policy as evolution is the opposite of implementation as control. In each phase of policy implementation one copes with new obstacles and

circumstances that in a way actualize any potential in the program that is being implemented. The fewer the steps involved in carrying out the program, the fewer the opportunities for a disaster to overtake it (Pressman and Wildavsky, 2012, p.147).

The separation of policy design from implementation is difficult however, the implementation part raises basic questions about the relationship between thought and action and how can the ideas be manifested in to actions. The perspective of which one looks at implementation is dependent on the kind of questions asked. Implementation also shapes policies. Most of the participants act according to the situation or circumstances without predicting or controlling the situation. Content of policies may not shape policy programs however; they define the arena in which processes take place. If implementation is part of policy design than, there is suggested that policy theory would be formulated towards policy execution (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1992).

Lastly, implementation as interaction is a less aggressive approach to policy implementation. It denies the existence of anything preceding implementation so that implementation is absorbed into interaction. Policy is considered as a collection of words and which requires communication between those in charge of executing the policy. The results should be a consequence of consensus on desired goals. It minimizes the importance of goals and plans. Results are not predicted and an element of surprises is maintained (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1992). This type of policy implementation minimizes the importance of goals and plans. The outcomes are likely to be different from those sought by any single participant.

The policy program's approaches differ in the way the policy is designed and implemented. The approaches are defined as principles, some policies are strict by design and rules other go through evolution through the process of implementation with a slight or strong interaction with the audience. The policies/ programs are often based on these principles; it is dependent on what kind of objectives



the policy has that the implementers will manifest its approach. It is also dependable on the possible obstacles policy implementers could encounter e.g. collaboration and communication.

Lipsky (1980) describes situations in which policy implementation might not work as planned. Street level bureaucrats thus, public servants who interact directly with clients including; police officers, teachers and public health workers, may encounter challenges during the implementation of policies. After all, street level bureaucrats are the ones that have to act in certain situations with their clients. They might disagree with the policy goals. Street level bureaucrats may also delay implementation due to misunderstanding of policy goals or due to for example lack of resources (Lipsky, 1980).

Moreover, Sabatier & Mazmanian stated that even though a policy may be well written and well explained there are other variables that are non-statutory that may influence the implementation process of policies. These variables include; media attention, public support, political support, resources, attitudes, skills and commitment of implementing agencies and officials (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980).

A study was conducted on intervention programs for diabetes in Canada (Wong et al., 2002). A conceptual (see Appendix B in Appendices) model was developed based on culturally responsive communities. There is suggested that participatory approaches and community control to take patients in to account can yield gains in health knowledge or status of a person. However, according to Wong et al. (2002), there methods might not give the expected or desired results due to failure in incorporating specific cultural components. The conceptual model incorporates among other prevention programs, community development which supposedly could facilitate empowerment at the personal, group and community level thus at the micro, mezzo and macro level. This would be realized by for example, promoting community capacity building. A close collaboration between the community and the program commissioners could create an ambience in which the

community members could feel as part of the program (Wong et al., 2002).

#### *Collaboration & Communication*

Campbell et al., (2013), concluded that there are specific elements that would increase the likelihood or possibility of a successful program. Some elements include collaboration among public health, law and judicial officials and also staff through a multi departmental task force.

According to Goggin et al., (1990), implementation is communication between policy makers and implementers. Clear messages that are sent to and received by implementers who are provided with; sufficient resources and who implement policies supported by affected group leads to implementation success. Moreover, strategic delays during policy implementation can lead to improved implementation through among other innovation and policy learning (Goggin et al., 1990).

Pressman and Wildavsky introduced the concept 'oversimplification'. Oversimplification is understood to be the process in which policy makers design a policy and under prepare for the implementation part of the policy for example using too many steps in the process of implementation and thus making the process more complicated. The fewer the steps involved in carrying out the program, the fewer the opportunities for a disaster to overtake the process including communication of tasks to implementers (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1992).

#### *Medical & Psychosocial Support*

In accordance with the research conducted by Kalra et al., (2013) in India, the psychosocial dimension of diabetes patients should be taken in to consideration. However; this should also be a point of attention to research what or correlate other possible factors other than biological and medical factors to the disease of diabetes.

Psychosocial support is especially important for type 1 diabetes patients who most of the time are diagnosed at a very young age or before adolescence. "The balance

between adult supervision and self-care should be defined at the first interaction and reevaluated at each clinic visit. This relationship will evolve as the child reaches physical, psychological, and emotional maturity” (American Diabetes Association, 2015, p. 570).

### *Instruments*

Researchers have conducted evidence based research through intervention programs for example in Congo (van Olmen et al., 2013). The research has intervened through secondary prevention programs by organizing text messages thus technological instruments that motivated diabetes patients to keep a healthy eating and living habit. The literature served to determine the above-mentioned relevant key factors for this research. The international context including the national context served as a basis to explore and to learn about good practices, success factors and possible barriers on diabetes management. Based on these practices, key factors were defined of which the theoretical model has been developed. The key factors mentioned in the scheme below will serve as a basis for the field research, as explained in the next chapter.

## **Research Design**

After the literature review and the theoretical model the researcher started to get insight in the history of diabetes management in Aruba, by conducting desktop research on past policies, programs and strategies that have been exercised for diabetes management on the island. Furthermore, the identified key factors, and theoretical framework served as a base for a topic list with questions that will be asked during interviews with different stakeholders on diabetes management in Aruba. In this way, specific scenarios of diabetes management will be addressed in a systematic manner.

The method used for the fieldwork of this research is qualitative research. Interviews have been scheduled with different stakeholders. The interviews were semi-structured

and face to face and were done with the use of a topic list. A topic list has the advantage of being able to address certain topics, but in order to be able to deviate from the list if it is necessary and to also ask additional questions (Baarda et al., 2013). In depth interviews allow researchers to delve deep in to the topic of the research. One can attain rich data from different perspectives of which a clear overview can be made of the reality of the different stakeholders/ organizations.

## **Selection of respondents**

The respondents were chosen through theoretical selection within the field of diabetes management in order to ensure that the selected participants would add value to the research (’t Hart et al., 2005). This means that all three levels of policy designing and implementation are represented, thus policymakers, managers and street level bureaucrats. Street level bureaucrats are individuals who work closely and personally with citizens on behalf of policy makers and government officers (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1992). This will give the researcher the opportunity to give conclusions and recommendations based on multiple perspectives of multiple stakeholders on these three levels. The researcher chose the first respondents based upon her knowledge of these relevant stakeholders/organizations. Furthermore, in line with ’t Hart et al. (2005) the researcher also has applied the snowball effect to collect its respondents. This means that the researcher added respondents on advice of other stakeholders. After all, her intention is to gather insights from a diverse group of relevant stakeholders. Interviews were recorded with permission of the participants (Baarda et al., 2013). The researcher started the data collection in March 2016. Until this point, 6 participants were interviewed. These interviews represented all levels of policy designing and implementation.

The selected respondents/ experts until this point are as follows;

1. An expert in the field of diabetes from AZV
2. A dietitian of IMSAN (Instituto Medico San Nicolas)
3. A representative of 'HuisartsenVereniging Aruba'
4. A specialist that works closely with diabetes patients
5. A (diabetes specialized) nurse from 'Wit GeleKruis'
6. A diabetes specialized nurse from 'Polikliniek Interne Geneeskunde'
7. A pharmacist assistant from Botica di Servicio
8. Three members of Plataforma di Salud Aruba
9. A pediatrician with experience with diabetes patients
10. A board member of 'Fundacion Diabetes Aruba'

Different selected respondents are also members of the Plataforma Promocion di Salud (Platform for Promotion of Health). This platform was an initiative of the Minister of Health, Elderly Care and Sports. It was established in January 2014, with its members, Sociaal Verzekerings Bank (SvB), InstitutoBibaSaludabel y Activo (IBISA) and Departamento di SaludPublico Aruba (DESPA). This platform consists of seven different organizations on the island namely; Departamento di Salud Publico (DESPA), Sociaal Verzekerings Bank (SvB), Wit Gele Kruis, AZV, IMSAN (Instituto Medico San Nicolas), dr. Horacio Oduber Hospital andIBISA(DESPA, email message to author, November 20, 2015). DESPA currently holds the presidency of theplatform. The main aim is to promote a healthier lifestyle among the community of Aruba as a priority. The platform aims at efficiently educating the community of Aruba to develop a healthier lifestyle and to give social support to the community in general (DESPA, email message to author, November 20, 2015).

## **Data collection**

Half of the intended respondents, six persons, have already been interviewed in the period March until the second week of April 2016. The respondents have fully and enthusiastically collaborated to the research. What was unexpected about data collection was the quick reaction

and availability of the respondents. Although their busy schedules they were very willing to participate in this research, because they saw the importance of it.

## **Data analysis**

As mentioned already, the interviews were semi- structured and a topic list was developed as guidance through the interviews. As the topic list was divided into categories of key factors, the analysis has also been executed with the support of already defined key factors. The defined key factors are; medical and psychosocial support, nature of the policy/program, policy/program development & implementation approach, collaboration & communication and instruments.

In Aruba there are different projects that have taken place in the past,however there are also project plans that have not been executed. There have been walks that were organized for the community in general (primary level) on the International Diabetes Day to raise awareness and to motivate the communityto have a healthy lifestyle. For these kinds of projects, communication is mentioned as a success factor as well as a barrier. Communication is mentioned as a success factor when and if the project is promoted frequently in the media in general.

Collaboration is also a success factor when experts including policy makers and managers collaborate among themselves. Communication and understanding is also a success factor when experts build a good relationship for collaboration purposes and ensure that street level bureaucrats understand tasks that are assigned to them. However, communication can also be a barrier when certain target groups are not reached when for example experts aim at informing the community, especially informing youngsters about different topics about diabetes e.g. diabetes type 2 symptoms. A street level bureaucrat and manager stated that "Taking away barriers is taking away fears and making space for better teamwork and collaboration to start running full speed". He emphasized

that it is not easy to collaborate with experts. It is important to resolve communication barriers as well.

It was striking to find that projects especially in the secondary level for individuals at risk at developing diabetes are not organized frequently or continuously. Projects organized for the community in general are also meant for at risk patients and these patients are also not specifically defined.

Projects in the secondary level for diagnosed patients have also been organized; an example is walking groups for patients. These walking groups were initiatives of experts who treat the patients and therefore one success factor was collaboration between the patients and the experts. Patients felt supported and motivated by the medical experts who treated them and therefore participated however, one barrier is commitment. In relation to the example of walking groups above, the extra support such as walking groups helps patients (socially) to accept their condition. Another respondent stated: "Diabetes ta un condicion y mester siña biba cune y manehè." (Translation: Diabetes is a condition that you have to learn to live and deal with it.). Even though patients are well aware of this statement, patients tend to rely on initiatives of others instead of taking initiative themselves. In relation to the example of walking groups above, the extra support such as walking groups helps patients socially to accept their condition. Diabetes patients do not receive holistic or expert support in the medical psychosocial support however, as experts in other fields they try to help the patients to accept their condition by giving them extra support and by motivating them.

The global context is completely different than the local context of diabetes management at the moment. In Aruba different projects and approaches are being used and executed namely; lectures by medical experts and professionals in the field of diabetes. There is a current project especially for experts that are focused towards bettering collaboration and communication between experts who treat patients to ensure that all experts are in the same line of communication.

In the global contexts, projects have been organized more focused on specific target groups. Diabetes Research Institute Foundation in the United States of America has been organizing different walks and concerts to raise funds in order to be able to find a cure for diabetes and raise awareness on diabetes prevention in general in the country. An intervention project for patients at risk of developing diabetes was developed in Japan to help these individuals lose weight and control their glycemic levels.

In the Republic of Cambodia, Congo and Philippines, patients have been being motivated and empowered by text messages that support them. This program is especially meant for diagnosed diabetes patients because; patients mostly experience challenges when they have to manage their condition on their own.

### **Preliminary conclusions and recommendations**

One of the preliminary conclusions is that Aruba in the field of diabetes management should focus more on communication and collaboration towards structured diabetes management on all three levels namely, on the level of community in general, individuals at risk of developing diabetes and patients who have been diagnosed as diabetics. Plataforma Promocion di Salud is a platform of which its members of different organizations including the Department of Public Health and IMSAN organize prevention projects together for the community of Aruba. It became visible through the interviews that there are no specific programs for at risk patients in Aruba.

Among others the respondents have recommended focusing more on informing the community about diabetes and how diabetes diagnosed patients can improve their health. The respondents have also recommended ensuring the continuity of projects and events for prevention in general for example lectures given by medical experts for the community in general. They also recommend that prevention of diabetes will be targeted to the age group of children.

Additionally, the experts (respondents) once again recommended to target another specific group for prevention of diabetes namely, 'at risk group' of developing diabetes by firstly defining this group, organizing more health check-ups and organizing patients better for treatment before 'at risk' patients develop the disease.

The respondents have unanimously recommended expanding the treatment of diabetes diagnosed patients with other disciplines that are important for the treatment of diabetes patients namely, medical psychosocial support. The respondents have explained that patients need extra support in order to be able to accept their condition. If patients accept their condition, medical experts will be able to treat the patients better and at a better pace of time in order to avoid that patients neglect their health and possibly develop or worsen diabetes related complications. Another recommendation for diabetes management of diagnosed patients is to develop an online platform where patients and medical experts can interact and find information about how diagnosed diabetes can be managed. It is important to mention that the medical experts are aware of the fact that if the online platform is executed then, this will require extra resources.

As recommendation on the preliminary conclusion answer to the main research question '*What are achievable and innovative approaches for successful and strategic management of diabetes in Aruba?*', the researcher recommends that a joint strategic more year plan is developed especially and specifically for diabetes management on all three levels of prevention namely; prevention in the community in general, prevention for 'at risk' patients and prevention for diagnosed patients. It is recommended that this plan is designed "bottom up", and a strong collaboration is enhanced among medical experts in order to understand and deal with medical diversity in relation to diabetes management. Additionally, this strategic plan should aim at organizing and defining 'at risk' patients of developing the disease and diagnosed patients of both types of diabetes and of all age ranges. As respondents have claimed that there is a lack of resources, this strategic plan should aim at reorganizing patients and at reallocating and redistributing resources according to the capacity of the island and the demand of service and treatment.



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### **Sun, sand, sea, seminars and research**

Research is very often thought of as a very solitary process in which the person in question can become overwhelmed with the entire process, add to that a traineeship and the fact of just combining these two could make one balk were it not under pressure by the sheer time management of it all.

With my participation in the UAUCU//UU project, instead of seeing it to being a burden to my already limited time resources, it actually provided me with the very thing I needed the most during this time; a group of peers who were also conducting their research and were just as open to not making this experience one of solitude, but one which was an enjoyable adventure the past few months, together. The social aspect during this process is mostly pushed away and deemed as a superfluous matter. The group of students that participated in the UAUCU//UU research project, do so with the background of their own discipline, which

makes the dynamism of the group stand out even more. It is in this synergy that it becomes energizing to conduct one's research and to be able to develop the resiliency needed when things do not go as planned. Which anyone who has already gone through this process can tell you that they seldom do.

The project carries on beyond the academic part, as the opportunity presented itself to participate in various conferences, abroad and on the island, in which we volunteered. It was an enriching experience, in both an academic and personal sense. It also allowed for an exceptional introduction to fellow UAUCU//UU students into the field I study and in which I am a trainee in.

Having participated in the project last year and this year, it is evident that participants in the research project are all driven by their curiosity and passion to explore areas of Aruba and be able to make a meaningful contribution to the island. I would like to thank Eric Mijts and Jocelyn Ballantyne, the drivers, into making this project a reality.

Although the article that is presented in this book is an extract of my desk review, it provides the necessary theoretical framework and part of the analysis in which Aruba maneuvers in the international arena. The remainder of the research will be presented in the larger study that I will be conducting as part of my undergraduate thesis.

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# Economic Diplomacy in Sub-National Island Jurisdiction

## ‘How Aruba Moves Internationally to its Economic Benefit’

Ghislaine Nicolaas

### 1. Introduction

Engaging in international representation used to be a sole act enjoyed by sovereign states and later on, in the 20th century, the advent of international organizations took a prominent role within the international realm. As “sovereignty is the dominant way of conceptualizing and ordering the world” (Adler-Nissen & Gad, 2013, p. 3), many international organizations yield their legitimacy due to its member states, but growing in this international arena are many other actors which make the entirety of the international landscape far more complex. Currently, the international arena has become “increasingly blurred by changing practices in international relations and particularly by the activity of non-sovereign and unrecognized jurisdictions in external representation” (Bartmann, 2006, p. 542). Such non-sovereign jurisdiction are sub-national island jurisdictions (SNIJs), scattered around the globe known as *confetti of empire* and enjoying certain autonomy from their metropole. These small islands are increasing their engagement in external relations and increasing their regional and global presence. This conduct is also known as para-diplomacy, defined by Bartmann (2006, p. 544) as “all those external activities by non-sovereign jurisdictions that stimulate and approximate the formal, legal and recognized diplomatic practices of sovereign states”.

Viewed mostly as idyllic exotic vacation destinations, SNIJs such as Aruba have in recent years increasingly acquired the means to enhance their para-diplomatic agency. This latent development is mostly due to the metropole retaining and resuming majority of the responsibilities on matters regarding foreign affairs. As “globalization has expanded economic space beyond the reach of national governments, thus pulling sub-national jurisdictions on to the larger stage of economic interaction” (Bartmann, 2006, p. 543) and in which para-diplomacy serves as a “multifunctional vehicle for the promotion of interests and identity” (Lecours, 2008, p.2) of these SNIJs in the global arena.

Within this framework of para-diplomacy an array of diplomatic instruments, which sovereign states used to be the sole proprietor of, are at the disposal of SNIJs. Lecours (2008, pp. 2-3) presents three different layers to para-diplomatic activities:

1. “Economic issues, aiming at developing an international presence for the purpose of attracting foreign investment, luring international companies, and targeting new markets for exports.
2. Cooperation in cultural, educational, technical, technological and other sectors and is not simply focused on economic gain.
3. Political considerations, sub-state governments seek to develop a set of international relations that will affirm the cultural distinctiveness, political autonomy



and the national character of the community they represent. Although, sub-state governments may have other political objectives than gaining recognition as a distinct community or a nation“.

This study seeks to gain insight into the manner of how economic interests are being pursued by a SNIJ in the para-diplomatic maneuvering space within the international realm. As such, Aruba lends itself to this case study setting as it has stipulated in its government agreement 2013-2017 their intent to use economic diplomacy activities as “conducting trade missions ... and public diplomacy should encourage economic activity in Aruba” (Government of Aruba Regeerprogramma 2013-2017, 2013, p.9) as a foreign and economic policy driver in their conduct in the international arena.

One such method for an increase in economic activity is the act of undertaking economic diplomatic trade missions to foreign countries. Economic diplomacy is defined as “export promotion, state visits, embassies and consulates” (Veenstra, Yakop, van Bergeijk, 2010, p. 3) that are used in the manner as to “use government relationships and government influence to promote the commercial interests of (a group of) companies in a foreign country” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Netherlands, 2013, p. 3).

### **1.1 Research Motive**

The case for Aruba is one of interest as the current Government of Aruba has stated that it is actively pursuing economic diplomatic instruments to stimulate economic activity. Taking place within the para-diplomatic framework that is accessible to SNIJs and the ever growing complexity and crowding of the opaque international arena between the political and the commercial interests of its country. As this is the crux of the matter, this paper is seeking to formulate an answer to the following question: ‘How does Aruba conduct economic diplomacy as a sub-national island jurisdiction?’

This research question will focus on the policies and space in which economic diplomacy of Aruba takes place. The central implication of this paper is to understand the manner in which the manoeuvring room Aruba is conducting its international affairs. This has been done by a comprehensive desk research of the available literature and source material. It presents an analysis on the four dimensions used by Senior (2015, p.27) “which builds forth on the analytic framework of Criekemans (2008) and Duran, Criekemans, Melissen (2009)” and Okano-Heijmans (2011). The dimensions are as follows:

1. Constitutional and institutional dimension, otherwise known as the context;
2. Foreign affairs policy, the setting or the theatre;
3. Para)Diplomatic instruments used, the tool;
4. Organizational actors and execution of foreign affairs policy, the process.

The paper is outlined as follows; the second chapter gives an introduction to Aruba as a country active in the international realm, while also presenting the framework, rationale, process and outcome of economic diplomacy. Subsequently, the third chapter presents the analytical description based on the four dimensions. Chapter four is the final chapter and presents a summarization of the analysis and discussion elements for future studies.

### **1.2 Relevance of the Research**

Baldacchino (2008, p.4) states that “the smaller the jurisdiction, the less likely is it that it has the internal capacity to generate research about itself”. As Aruba is continuously seeking the encouragement of economic activity with foreign partners, this research will contribute to gain a deeper insight in the space the island finds itself and the policies and organizational actors that are used in the realization of this matter. Fostering a greater understanding of the underlying processes, experiences of participants and ultimately the outcomes of trade missions will allow for an in-depth analysis of different aspects to

conducting a trade mission. This valuable knowledge can be used to adapt future trade mission endeavors for both public and private participants to be aimed more at their respective targeted objectives.

With the field of study regarding SNIJs conducting para-diplomatic activities still being in its infancy, this research will add to the small, but growing, repertoire on this topic. As “political culture and historical consciousness have a significant impact on the way that economic diplomacy is framed, both at the national and practical levels” (Okano-Heijmans, 2011, p.30) there is relevance to the fact that the locus of the research is being generated from the SNIJ itself.

## 2. Aruba’s Economic Rise

With the introduction of its status aparte in 1986, Aruba gained self-determination and with the institutional mechanisms giving it the ability to conduct to its own accord regarding its interests, all the while still being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Aruba, like many islands that find themselves in similar relation with their metropole, enjoys “a large measure of autonomy in a number of issue areas, providing it with economic flexibility and a form of ‘quasi-sovereignty’ that it exercises in its own interest” (Sutton, 2011, p. 145). The manifestation of the economic interests of Aruba can evidently be identified when looking at its economic model since its status aparte.

Within this ‘quasi-sovereignty’, Aruba has since the mid 80’s focused their economic growth model on the development of the tourism sector. The choice was made with the final closing of the oil refinery in the 1980’s, a plant that had been operational since the 1920’s and which had been the cause for both an economic and demographic boom (Dresscher, 2009) for the island. The efforts in developing the tourist industry had proven successful to Aruba as its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) saw a significant and fast increase. With the success of tourism, Aruba prospered and

the fast economic growth has “continued to rely heavily on [im]migration to meet the increasing demand of labor” (Dresscher, 2009, p. 25). As of 2014, the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) reports that the “total contribution of travel & tourism to the GDP of Aruba was 88.4%” (ATA, 2016). Out of a list of 184 countries, the island ranks number one by its relative scale in the manner of the size of contribution the tourism sector makes towards its GDP.

In a recent study by Alberts (2016), which examined Aruba’s economic ascent based on the above mentioned model, states that with the finite carrying capacity and spatial constraints that this model can not continue *ad infinitum*. Even going so far as to questioning why no attempt was made “to shift economic development towards a more productive, less immigration-dependent and less space-consuming direction” (Alberts, 2016, p. 89). Presently, Aruba can be classified as an import economy, as it is described as a “small open economy with limited manufacturing ... [where] imports increase gradually [and] exports are very low” (<http://www.arubaeconomicaffairs.aw/>). The tourist industry is the main economic pillar on the island by the services it provides. It is, therefore, intriguing if by means of economic diplomacy a new impetus is being given in terms of the main factors of production, labor, capital and technology beyond the fixed market space of Aruba by entry to new markets abroad.

### 2.1 Economic Diplomacy

Defined in this paper as “export promotion, state visits, embassies and consulates” (Veenstra, Yakop, van Bergeijk, 2010, p. 3) that are used in the manner as to “use government relationships and government influence to promote the commercial interests of (a group of) companies in a foreign country” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Netherlands, 2013, p. 3). A singular method of economic diplomacy does not exist, matter of fact different strands exist on a wider range based on the intended objective of a mission.

Okano-Heijmans (2011, p. 20) presents a variety of five different strands of economic diplomacy:

<b>Commercial diplomacy</b>	<b>Trade diplomacy</b>	<b>Financial diplomacy</b>	<b>Inducements</b>	<b>Sanctions</b>
trade promotions	bilateral: FTAs, EPAs multilateral WTO	currency swap agreements exchange-rate policy	bilateral aid: grants, loans, debt relief	embargo (exports; state) boycott (imports; individuals) aid suspension
Investment promotion	(anti-dumping) tariffs	buying/selling of government bonds	humanitarian aid	aid suspension
tourism promotion	export or import licenses	freezing assets	granting access to technology	capital controls
promotion of socially responsible investing	import or export quotas, trade and investment barriers	withholding dues or payments	granting membership of international organization	blacklist

The goals can be divergent as they serve the needs of two distinct groups: government and businesses, although they remain interconnected. Rana & Chatterjee (2011, pp. 6-7) describe four distinct objectives: promotion of trade, networking, country promotion and regulatory [framework]” while Janssen (2013, p. 12) asserts that “all strands of economic diplomacy, but especially commercial and trade are about a constant interaction between inward (attracting FDI) and outward (increasing export markets)”. Oudalov (2013, p. 53) narrows it down that businesses state their objectives as: “cooperation, exploring market opportunities, fact-finding and leveraging government presence”. These objectives can be seen on a larger spectrum which on one end focusses on the ‘business end’ and thus on generating prosperity, and the other end the ‘power-play end’ where the focus is squarely on creating stability. However, the interpretation of this spectrum and the

different strands of economic diplomacy in an illustration is “particularly representative of Western countries, and would have to be adjusted slightly if it was to represent other (groups of) countries or regions” (Okano-Heijmans, 2011, pp. 18-19).

## 2.2 Rationale for Economic Diplomacy

Economic diplomacy is an instrument applied in such a manner to “use government relationships and government influence to promote the commercial interests of (a group of) companies in a foreign country” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands, 2013, p. 3). In the past few years, Aruba has been active in visiting and receiving public and private representatives of countries from around the world in order to establish or increase its trade and relations. These trade missions have been organized by both public and private parties. As previous research has intended to

demonstrate “that commercial diplomacy is...significant in the bilateral trade relationships of developing countries” (Veenstra, Yakop, van Bergeijk, 2010, p.1).

Aruba is situated in a peculiar and particular place within the greater international sphere, as it does not possess the absolute sovereign powers of a state. Aruba is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and can thusly be categorized as an sub-national-island jurisdiction (SNIJ). “Sub-national island jurisdictions (SNIJs) are among the less recognized players in conventional international relations, despite the fact that many of them are now particularly active in external representation, engaging in unexpected external relations, and acquiring means to enhance their regional and even global presence” (Bartmann, 2006, p. 541). Within the ever increasing globalized world and regional trade agreements between large global economic blocs, the challenges for SNIJs are intensifying in manners of “attaining future growth and prosperity” (Read, 2004, p. 365) by finding themselves marginalized on the global economic stage. This is confirmed by recent studies by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2015, p. 7) who states that the “region has a limited participation in the global value chains” and projects the region’s economic growth at a rate of “just 0.2% for next year”. Furthermore, the Commonwealth denotes in its flagship Trade Review report (2015, p. xviii-xix) that “the trade growth nexus is found to be weak for small states”. Citing “competitive disadvantages arising from such factors as their inherent characteristics, for example their small domestic markets and unfavourable geographical location, yielding excessive trade costs, as well as the erosion of trade preferences have resulted in their continued declining share in global trade. Export orientation in their economies has also suffered.”

With the ever increasing interconnectedness of global economies, SNIJs are experiencing the compounding effects of being a small island; they cannot afford to stay on the

sidelines any longer and are taking up greater agency to foster economic relations in the international arena. As “recent studies have confirmed the existence of a significant positive relationship between instruments of economic diplomacy (export promotion, state visits, embassies and consulates) and cross-border economic activity (exports, imports, tourism)” (Veenstra, Yakop, van Bergeijk, 2010, p. 3).

The benefits of economic diplomacy should be seen as twofold, as on the one hand the government affirms and increases its relations on a political level, while on the other hand deepening its economic ties with the host country. Elucidated in this manner might make the rationale behind undertaking economic diplomacy apparent, however depending on the adherence to different theories for governance and market interventions beliefs may differ.

### **2.3 Process of Economic Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is a method of statecraft that is inherent to any sovereign state as an instrument to conduct its affairs on an international stage. As sovereignty was the main attribute needed to be able to conduct these affairs in an international sphere, recently sub-national island jurisdictions are “allowed considerable autonomy and latitude, even in relations with the outside world beyond their metropolitan centre” (Baldacchino, 2010, p. 142). This opens up an entirely new space where such SNIJs are able to conduct foreign policy from their vantage point.

For Aruba, its use of diplomacy in particularly the use of trade missions has become an instrument to stimulate bilateral trade and investments. This is coming to fruition in a two pronged approach described in the government agreement 2013-2017. The first approach focusses on “developing Aruba as a gateway between Europe and Latin America” (Government of Aruba Regeerprogramma 2013-2017, 2013 p. 9) by organizing ‘Europe meets the Americas’ conferences on Aruba. The second approach is realized by “conducting trade missions to these [foreign]

destinations and an active public diplomacy should encourage economic activity in Aruba” (Government of Aruba Regeerprogramma 2013-2017, 2013 p. 9).

Two distinct approaches as with the former, Aruba acts as a host country and with the latter it is the home country that sends out a delegation towards a host country. Due to the scope of the research, the former approach will not be included into the research, however it is worth mentioning that for future evaluation studies it remains a fruitful program to research. As the paper has defined economic diplomacy as “export promotion, state visits, embassies and consulates” (Veenstra, Yakop, van Bergeijk, 2010, p. 3) that are used in the manner as to “use government relationships and government influence to promote the commercial interests of (a group of) companies in a foreign country” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands, 2013, p. 3). It is to be understood from this definition that these missions are headed by government officials, as the facilitators, and private companies that accompany the delegation, as the actors, and have an objective as to be “translating opportunities into outcomes” (Oudalov, 2013, p. 3).

The planning and organizing of these missions into a program with activities that are suited to the needs and interests of the participants is an entire process on itself. At first glance, it would be self-evident to make a distinction between the public and private sphere participants. Yet, this oversimplification of the public sphere in which compartmentalization separates the departments of economic affairs and foreign affairs into two different ministries; Economic Affairs, Environment, Energy and Communication and General Affairs, Science, Innovation and Sustainability, respectively. At what stage of this process are the private sector participants approached and involved, if even, in the entire process? Furthermore, as Aruba fits the description of a SNIJ and as is clearly defined within the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the practice of conducting foreign affairs is a Kingdom matter.

## 2.4 Outcome Economic Diplomacy

Competing views of trade missions outcomes exists as the trade mission delegates announce in the press the success of such missions mentioning the many contracts, memoranda of understanding, letter of intents were signed. “On the negative side, Michael Hart (2007) argues, “Trade missions and similar programs, while popular with ministers, have virtually no enduring impact on trade and investment patterns.” (Head & Ries, 2010, p. 755). Head & Ries (2010, p. 755) go on to state that “under the sceptical, many of the announced deals do not actually come to fruition and most of the fulfilled agreements would have occurred anyway.”

The literature presents a distinct difference in the level of income and thus the development of a country and the significance of the trade missions outcomes. In their research Veenstra, Yakop, van Bergeijk (2010, p.18) present the difference as “the impact of the instruments of economic and commercial diplomacy is the strongest for low and middle-income countries, which confirms the economic theory that it is less important for high-income countries.”

## 3 Analysis

As prominent American diplomat George Kennan stated that “a political society does not live to conduct foreign policy; it would be more correct to say that it conducts foreign policy in order to live” (Kennan, 1954, p.4). This statement exhibits the *sine qua non* of a foreign policy positioning the interests of the subsequent country at its core. Aruba is pursuing its economic interests by operating based on its national interests in the wider regional and international arena. This chapter will provide an analysis of the context, theatres, tools and processes Aruba uses regarding its international economic and foreign policy.

### 3.1 Constitutional and Institutional Dimension

The Kingdom consists of 4 autonomous countries, the

Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. By acquiring its *status aparte* in 1986, Aruba gained the capability to self determination on matters regarding their island by themselves. The Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands makes a distinction between the internal matters of each country and the area of Kingdom Affairs. “Article 3 of the Charter specifies which areas are considered ‘Kingdom Affairs’. These areas include foreign relations, defence and Dutch nationality” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 2). It goes on to state that “when pursuing these international contact they must operate within the framework of the Kingdom’s foreign policy” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 2). Thusly, the foreign policy framework of the Kingdom is leading and provides the space in which Aruba is navigating its own interests. However, “the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has repeatedly stated that the Caribbean countries [Aruba, Curaçao, Sint Maarten] have the ability to act independently outside of the foreign policy framework on functional and economic areas. Provided that they follow the following guidelines: maintaining the unity of the Kingdom policy, consider the interests of another Kingdom country, consider the responsibilities, the role and tasks of the foreign representative of the Kingdom and compliance with the international rules of conduct” (Senior, 2015, p. 40). An important note to add is due to this constitutional arrangement “only the Kingdom of the Netherlands can conclude, ratify and accede to international legal agreements, such as treaties and conventions” and “treaty implementation and compliance is an autonomous responsibility of the individual countries” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 4)

This constitutional constellation could conjure up limits and barriers it could also be considered a highly strategic choice as a proposed independence in 1996 was ceased in 1990 by then Prime Minister Oduber (Hoogers & De Vries, 2002). As Baldacchino & Milne (2006) and Oostindie (2006) present their views on retaining SNIJ status, “opting for non-sovereign jurisdictional status

may be a highly rational, strategic choice” (Baldacchino & Milne, 2006, p.490). The reasoning for this could range from; receiving aid for disaster relief, providing territorial security, “direct metropolitan monetary transfers, being embedded in a larger and generally stable constitutional entity serves to strengthen these dependent territories’ institutional environment, with ensuing positive effects for local business and governments and enhanced credibility for international finance” (Oostindie, 2006, p. 611). Nevertheless, Baldacchino & Milne (2006, p. 489) determined that “the rationale for these metropolitan-island arrangements, however, is scarcely one-sided”.

### **3.2 Foreign Affairs Policy**

The Government of Aruba has stated its intent to use economic diplomacy and its main goal being to stimulate economic activity in Aruba, in its government agreement program 2013-2017. The Government’s explanatory memorandum on their proposed budget of its ministries 2016, gives an overview on its focus areas for its international economic and foreign policy. The first area focuses on the European Union, particularly declaring its “specific and ambitious objective for European businesses to establish themselves in Aruba, which serves the purpose as being a gateway to the wider region. This is a stimulus for the economy, in depth (growth) and width (diversification)” (Government of Aruba, 2016, p. 28). A second focus area is placed on “presenting Aruba on important podiums, supported by strong public diplomacy efforts [will] remain important to Aruba” (Government of Aruba, 2016, p. 29). Public diplomacy “encompasses culture, the media, education and all the different activities through which publics, abroad and at home, are influenced in relation to a country’s foreign policy” (Rana, 2007, p. 29). It is interesting to note that “public diplomacy is closely connected with the pursuit of external economic interests” (Rana, 2007, p. 30). Lastly, “the focus of economic affairs on foreign investors and strategic partners will be done by applying an integrated approach, including the ministries of General Affairs and Economic Affairs, the Department of Economic

Affairs, Trade and Industries (DEZHI), Department Foreign Affairs (DBB), Aruba Investment Agency (ARINA), Free zone Aruba (FZA) and other stakeholders” (Government of Aruba, 2016, p. 57).

The policy provides a clear indication on what the focus of Aruba will be the upcoming year. However, it does not specify the objectives, area or sector of what is being pursued beyond the terms, foreign investors, strategic partners, European business and international fora. Then again, it could provide the public officials with extra space to move in as there are no specific targets set, on the other hand by having no distinct goals it would be difficult to be effective in the efforts.

### 3.3 Diplomatic Instruments

Being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands provides Aruba the access to the complete diplomatic network of the Kingdom. Not only does it have access to this network of over 150 diplomatic posts “the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [the Netherlands] and the embassies, consulates and missions abroad work for the Kingdom as a whole and all its constituent parts” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 2). Within its constitutional arrangements, Aruba has a plenipotentiary minister stationed in the Hague, the Netherlands. Furthermore, the Government has decided to create mainstay post for its own representatives to be able to serve its interests, one stationed in Brussels to the European Union and one stationed in Washington D.C., United States Aruba. Aruba also enjoys observer or associate status in various multilateral institutions, has various trade agreements in place but most notably is not a “complete member of the World Trade Organisations (WTO)” (<http://www.arubaeconomicaffairs.aw/>).

Aruba is also host to many conferences (i.e. Green Aruba, Europe meets the Americas) that it utilizes as part of its diplomatic instruments, inviting both public officials and representatives of businesses to visit the island and get a

first hand experience in what they would be making an investment in. Utilizing its strength as an alluring tropical island setting to attract potential investors. Furthermore, the island actively pursues promotion of itself in markets abroad by organizing and participating in trade missions. In 2015, an Aruba delegation, consisting of a public official and representatives of private entities, participated in four trade missions: Colombia, Panama, Miami and Cuba. In early 2016, another trade mission went to Cuba, however, no new trade missions have been announced to take place in the remainder of the year.

Per the signing of memorandum of understandings (MoU), the Government of Aruba can enter into non-legally binding agreements. This is an important element as only a sovereign entity could enter these legally binding agreements and in that case the Kingdom of the Netherlands would need to be the principal signatory party. In an MoU the parties state their intent on their part, which indicates their area of cooperation. According to, the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, “individual countries are allowed to conclude MoUs in areas in which they have autonomy, as long as these MoUs do not infringe on the foreign policy of the Kingdom as a whole” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 4).

The explanatory memorandum on their proposed budget of its ministries 2016 (p. 29) presents the following countries with which Aruba has an MoU: “Colombia, Ecuador, Panama” and that it states that it needs to give further detailed content to these agreements.

### 3.4 Organisational Actors

While Aruba has a dedicated Department of Foreign Affairs (DBB) (<http://www.arubeforeignaffairs.com/>), with its four divisions: legal issues and treaties, political and consular affairs and economic and public diplomacy. Albeit, it is not the only public organization active in serving the interests of Aruba beyond its borders economically. The Department of Economic Affairs, Trade and Industry (DEZHI) and



Aruba Investment Agency (ARINA) are also active in this area. There are no clear demarcations alluded to on either websites that could indicate the international areas these departments work in. Furthermore, the explanatory memorandum on their proposed budget of its ministries 2016 stated that the Free Zone Aruba, a government owned entity, is also involved in attracting foreign investment and strategic partners. Beyond the public sector, on the other end of the spectrum the Chamber of Commerce (KVK) and the Aruba Trade & Industry Association (ATIA) represent the interests of enterprising Aruba.

The identification of the actors is of importance as “in many ways, the domestic level provides insight into the underpinnings of the power bases and the constitutive process of economic diplomacy, and thereby in the behaviour that results from it” (Okano-Heijmans, 2011, p. 11). With “negotiations among groups of domestic actors thus serve to help us understand the (foreign) policy-making process and the economic diplomacy strategy of governments” (Okano-Heijmans, 2011, p. 11). These identified actors as described in the explanatory memorandum are taking active part in materializing the phenomenon of economic diplomacy in Aruba.

#### **4. Discussion**

Summarizing the analysis of the paper to answer the question, *‘how does Aruba conduct economic diplomacy as a sub-national island jurisdiction?’* This is has been analyzed using the categorizations of Lecours (2008), the categorization and conceptual framework of Okano-Heijmans (2011). Lecours (2008) presented three layers for para-diplomatic activities to take place in: purely focused on economic issues, seeking cooperation in a multitude of sectors cultural, educational, technical, technological and other sectors and with political considerations, as sub-state governments seek to develop a set of international relations that will affirm the cultural distinctiveness, political

autonomy and the national character of the community they represent. From the material that was available to perform the desk research, it becomes apparent that Aruba moves freely between the layer of economic layers and seeking greater cooperation in various sectors. It remains unclear if there are any political considerations at play in its expression of its international economic and foreign policy.

In addition, Okano-Heijmans (2011) provides a wider spectrum on which economic diplomacy is deployed in making a distinction between five strands of economic diplomacy: commercial, trade, financial, inducements, sanctions. The analysis of the context, tools, theatres, and processes that is being used by Aruba places it firmly in the area of applying mostly commercial and trade diplomatic concepts of economic diplomacy. A probable reason for this could be as Aruba is not in the possession of complete sovereign diplomatic capabilities.

The analysis in this paper is an extract of the desk research that was performed as part of a larger study which seeks to identify how Aruba is executing its economic diplomacy in order to foster greater economic activity. At its core, economic diplomacy is a collaboration between the public officials, in a facilitating role, and the private sector, as the actor, where many actors influence the phenomenon. The analysis provides the framework in which Aruba is maneuvering within the para-diplomatic realm and discloses areas in which further research is needed in order to ascertain the nature of its economic diplomacy. As economic diplomacy is a concept that is used to its fullest extent by sovereign nations, for many SNIJs it remains a matter of trial and error in the manner of how to conduct these missions which in turn cause a constraint on their available resources. This study aims to go beyond the theoretical analysis and delve into the practical processes and practices that are being used to address the national interests abroad.



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The moment I heard about this project, the curiosity as well as the necessity to join was immediate. The idea at that time was; this is an opportunity to experience what working together meant, specifically interacting with an international team. Furthermore, this would also help keep track with my thesis. The project is a collaboration of local and international students and lecturers from Aruba and the Netherlands, which has a remarkable objective; contribute to the greater wellness of the island, provide support towards each other, further exchange ideas, and knowledge.

From the beginning till the very end, my expectations were not off beam at all. For instance, being in a multilingual society where we are familiar to making use of two to three languages without any problem, I still had the need to rehearse my Dutch. Even though Dutch is given at schools on Aruba, as a student the language is more often

used at school than at home. Simply because starting a conversation in the native language; Papiamento is easier. Thus making use of this opportunity, was also to practice my Dutch. As for the students from Netherlands, they were very collaborative and easy to go around. When I expressed that I preferred interacting in Dutch, they did not hesitate; they immediately started communicating in Dutch with me. There were no culture differences, I felt at ease around them. I felt as I gained six new friends. Furthermore, this project assisted me in staying mentally strong and motivated with my thesis. If at any time the idea of giving up came to mind, the thought of this project being reliant on me, immediately helped me feel motivated again.

An unforgettable moment for me was in the course of Papiamento, where the students from Netherlands got to try “funchi” (cornmeal mush) which was freshly made for them. Funchi is a traditional food on the island of Aruba for locals to eat with fish or soup. I find sharing historical knowledge about Aruba important, because this way international visitors can understand a bit more about the culture of the island. In addition, the students from Netherlands enjoyed getting a taste of an authentic treat of Aruba. This moment made me feel proud, seeing I had the opportunity to share a part of Aruba with them. As a final point, I would like to elaborate on the effect of cultural differences. In my perspective, the impression I got from the encounters between the two groups had no cultural differences. The encounters felt like I knew the students from Netherlands extensively. They were always ready to help one and other and it was most certainly easy to have conversations with them. We are just some regular students who want to graduate and have a good time while we are at it.

# Absenteeism in the Public Sector

Giancarla L. Lobbrecht

## Introduction

In this section the business problem, research problem, research objectives, and the research question will be explained.

### 1.1 Business Problem

Efficiency losses due to employee absence cost organizations millions of dollars every year (Dalton and Mesch, 1991; Mason and Griffin, 2003). Absenteeism has been growing regularly in the past decade in companies. This is a worldwide phenomenon which employers deal with on a continual basis. According to Kronos Global Absence Survey (2011), employees in Australia, Canada, China, France, Mexico, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (US) usually use sickness as an excuse but, in reality, they are not sick. Absenteeism in the workplace is an economically costly problem for employers (Furnham and Bramwell, 2006). Additionally, the routine employer surveys indicated that 89% of employers view sickness absence as a burden on business (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 2002). Furthermore, according to the British employer surveys 4.4% of working time is vanished through absenteeism, which is related to an average of 10 working days per employee per year (CIPD, 2002). Reducing absenteeism is one of the most unfamiliar methods of reducing company expenses (Hamilton-Atwell,

2003). It has been anticipated that employee absenteeism in the US affects the US economy approximately 40 billion dollars a year (Gaudine and Saks, 2001). According to Steel, Rentsch and Scotter (2007), labor costs are frequently a company's single biggest budgetary expense. Corporate financial performance can be straightforward enhanced if labor costs are controlled. Furthermore, absenteeism is one sort of cost related behavior. Gale (2003) stated that absenteeism ran as high as 14.3% of total payroll. Absenteeism is broadly seen as being connected to decreased productivity for the overall work environment (Mars, Hackett, Mirvis and Grady, 1986).

### 1.2 Research Problem

Despite absenteeism becoming a topic of discussion in various organizations in different countries across the world. On Aruba, absenteeism in the public sector is high with an average between 2010 to 2014 it is 9.33% compared to the private sector which is below 3% with a sick leave rate of approximately 1.12%. Any organizations that wants to have the best or most effective employees in their organization needs to understand the internal and external surroundings of their business. Absenteeism is an internal problem that many public organizations confront on a daily basis. According to Romero and Strom (2011), absenteeism has a radical effect on productivity and bottom-line profits. This is through direct and indirect pathways, such as salary

that is connected with employee turnover.

In Aruba, the absenteeism in both the private and public sector are controlled by Social Insurance (SVb). There is no evidence that people working for the government in Aruba medically differ from people who work in the private sector (Mr. Ron Bieze, personal communication, September 17, 2015). The public sector falls under the rules of the Landsbesluit Materieel Ambtenaren recht (LMA) and Landsverordening Vakantie en Vrijstelling Van Vienst Ambtenaren (LVVDA). In the “Verzuimrapportage Dossier Manager” the components civil servant reports sick to the most are evaluated by SVb. However, in Aruba, there is limited information on why absenteeism is high in the public sector. The aim of this research is to assess the reasons for having a high rate of absenteeism in the public sector, as there is no research clarifying this.

In the report of SVb, where the absenteeism data of the Aruban government is stated (2010-2014), indicates that women’s absenteeism rate is higher than that of men. The absenteeism rate of women in the public sector of Aruba was in 2014 9.55 % and men 8.13%. The average of the absenteeism rate between the years 2010 to 2014 amongst men is 8.71% and amongst woman is 10.07%. Several studies have indicated that females tend to miss more work than males (Flanagan, Strauss, & Ulman, 1974; Garrison & Muchninsky, 1977; Johns, 1978; Scott & McClellan, 1990). According to the insurance physician and head of the department Occupational Health SVB Aruba, Mr. Bieze, the cause that women have higher absenteeism than men is not because women are the weaker sex, but this phenomenon is caused because women often have two employers and men just one. Compared to women that work and take care of family and household, women are generally more overloaded than men. The absenteeism rate of the public sector in 2010 was 9.10% and it became 8.78% in 2014. Even though it decreased with 0.32% the absenteeism percentage still is considered high (SVb report 2010-2014). The average of the absenteeism rate between the years 2010 to 2014 was in total 9.33%.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The primary aim of this study is to describe and understand if work related attitudinal factors and gender role have an influence on absenteeism. The work related attitudes that are going to be used in this study are; organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The proposed research objective is to evaluate if gender, flexible work hours and family responsibility affect absenteeism via its effect on work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Thus, to investigate if flexible work hours, family responsibility and gender (which are considered as psychological contracts) influence absenteeism and if the effect on absenteeism has an influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Among the nine ministries on the island, the department of each ministry that has the highest rate of absenteeism will be approached for this research. Potential participants are the civil servants who work in several department in the public sector of Aruba. In order to gather enough data, a sample size of 347 participants will be the approach. Ethical aspects are extremely important in this research.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In general, this research will focus on the fact that the absenteeism rate is high among the civil servants in the public sector. The focus is geared towards the likelihood of unenthusiastic job satisfaction and organizational commitment, being the reasons for a high percentage of absenteeism in the public sector. To further investigate this I formulate my research question as follows:

To what extent do work attitudes and the role of gender influence the absenteeism in the public sector of Aruba?

Moreover, the sub-questions (SQ) will also be addressed:

1. Is there a relationship between gender, family responsibility, and flexible work hours to organizational commitment and job satisfaction?
2. Is there a relationship between the gender role and absenteeism level in the public sector?
3. Is there a relation between job satisfaction and

absenteeism in the public sector?

4. Is there a relationship between organizational commitment and absenteeism in the public sector?
5. Is there a relationship between age and absenteeism in the public sector?
6. Which components of organizational commitment have the most influence of absenteeism in the public sector?

## 2. Conceptual Model

To answer the research question, a conceptual model was adopted to present a guideline for this research as illustrated in figure 1 below. The proposed research objective is to evaluate if gender, flexible work hours and family responsibility affect absenteeism via its effect on work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Thus, to examine if flexible work hours,

family responsibility and gender (which is considered as psychological contracts) influence absenteeism. Similar to job satisfaction, various previous research has recommended that higher levels of organizational commitment are associated to lower absenteeism (Blau and Boal, 1987; Koch and Steers, 1978; Steers, 1977). For that reason, organizational commitment and job satisfaction were chosen as the two work attitudes that will be used in this research. According to De Vaus (2014, p.21), “a variable is characteristic that has more than one category”. De Vaus further explained that in “cause-and-effect” terms variables can be distinguished in three types: dependent, independent and intervening variables (2014).

Gender, flexible work hours and family responsibility are the independent variables that affect absenteeism level (the dependent variable) via its effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (intervening variable). This is best illustrated below in figure 1.

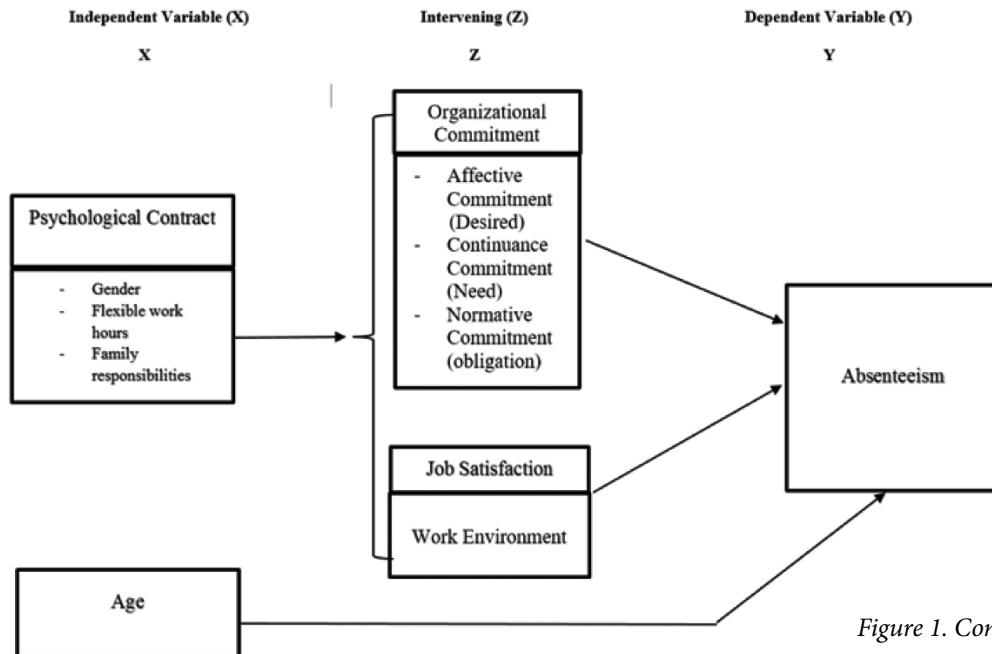


Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Based on the reviewed literature and proposed conceptual model the study hypotheses are the following:

- Hypothesis 1: Individuals that perceive flexible work hours will report higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than individuals who do not.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between age and absenteeism. Older employees will have less absenteeism.
- Hypothesis 3: The relationship between the perception of flexible work hours and organizational commitment and job satisfaction will be stronger for women than for men.
- Hypothesis 4: Women will demonstrate a higher tendency for absence than man.
- Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between family responsibility and absenteeism.
- Hypothesis 6: Individuals that perceive flexible work hours will report higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than individuals who do not.
- Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and absenteeism
- Hypothesis 8: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism

### 3. Methodology

This section describes the research design and methods that will be used in this study.

#### 3.1 Operationalization

The first construct, acting as the dependent variable is absenteeism. Absenteeism is referred to as a specific combination of behaviors connected by expectations about the location of an individual given a specific time (Atkin and Goodman, 1984). Some studies formulate absenteeism into two central types, voluntary or involuntary absenteeism. Voluntary absenteeism indicates a conscious decision by the subordinate about whether to attend work on any given day. Involuntary absenteeism indicates that it is beyond the direct control of the subordinate for instance transportation problems or family funeral (Hackett

& Guion, 1985; Steers and Rhodes, 1978). This study will focus on voluntary absenteeism. Voluntary absenteeism was chosen, because according to the study of Edwards (2014), the dimensions such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction were stronger pointers of voluntary absenteeism.

The second construct which acts as the independent variable are the psychological contracts. Psychological contracts contain 3 variables; flexible work hours, gender and family responsibility. Psychological contracts, refer to “beliefs that individuals hold regarding promises made, accepted and, relied upon between themselves and another” (Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni, 1994, p. 466), it is the perception of whether the person has flexible work hours that pushes the psychological contracting process Flexible work hours means, “Employees may choose when they come to work and when they leave, as long as they work during certain hours referred to as ‘core hours’ ” (Scandura and Lankau, 1997, pg. 378). Gender is referred in this study as the condition of a person being male or female. Family responsibility is about a person that is in the position that demands the need for child-care or dependent-elderly care.

The last constructs acting as intervening variables are job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction refers to the overall assessment a person makes regarding his/her work environment (Weis, Dawis, England and Lofquist, 1967). According to Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979), organizational commitment signifies an individual’s identification with the goals of the organization, how much the organization values participation in the organization and the degree to which they plan to work to attain organizational goals. The measurement of organizational commitment contains 3 variables which are affective, continuance and obligation.

#### 3.2 Data collection

In this section, data collection, procedures, instrument and sampling will be discussed.

##### 3.2.1 Procedures

Data is going to be collected in person on a voluntary

basis from a sample of respondents at the governmental department. Data will be collected in the first week of the month of April of 2016, throughout the days in the week. Explanation of the study and questionnaires are going to be clarified to the mentioned departments. Participation of the questionnaire will be anonymous and a cover letter is included for guaranteed confidentiality on the data collected.

### 3.2.2 Instrument

In order to be able to examine the relationship anticipated by the conceptual model and the hypotheses. This research is going to make use of a self-administered paper based survey approach as a method for collecting the data. The work and life attitudes survey (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979) is used to measure work attitude. This survey has 67 scale items which is separated into eight subscales. These are work involvement, intrinsic job motivation, job satisfaction, perceived intrinsic, job characteristics, self-rated anxiety, life, satisfaction, and happiness. Which, only one subscale is going to be focused on for the purpose of this study. The subscale that is going to be used is 'job satisfaction', which consists of 15 items; for example 'I am satisfied/dissatisfied with the physical work conditions'. Absenteeism is going to be measured based on the participants self-reported days missed from work in the twelve months prior to the study. To estimate the number of work days missed, six statements are going to be used; for instance 'you were not sick or on vacation, but you could not face working' (Edwards, 2014). Lastly, the three commitment components are going to be measured by Meyer et al., (1993) six items versions of the scales (Seršić, 1999). These are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Furthermore, this survey is going to be divided into 5 sections:

- Section A is going to be about the demographic of the respondents
- Section B is going to be about the degree to which a person reports satisfaction with the job

- Section C is going to be about the influence the role of the gender has on absenteeism
- Section D is going to be about attendance decision
- Section E is going to measure an employee's commitment towards the job

These variables will be rated on a 6-point Likert Scale (6-Strongly agree 5- Agree 4- Somewhat agree 3 – Somewhat disagree and 1- Strongly disagree) which was developed by Dr. Rensis Likert in 1932. Likert scales are a psychometric response that is used in questionnaires to attain participant's preferences or degree of a statement or set of statements (Bertram). Moreover, the participants are asked to designate their level of agreement with a given statement by way of an ordinal scale.

### 3.2.3 Sample

This study's sample will consist of civil servants from nine different governmental departments. The sampling method chosen will make use of probability sampling and is further going to utilize a stratified random sampling (SRS). Stratified random sampling is a probability sampling in which the researcher divides the whole population into diverse subgroups, then randomly selects the final subjects correspondingly from the diverse subgroups (De Vaus, 2010). The stratified variable will be gender. The stratified variable will be divided into two categories; women and men. Sample size will be dependent on the total civil servants that work in the 9 several governmental departments. This information will be provided by Departamento Recurso Humano (DRH). DRH is in charge of the growth and implementation of personal and organizational policy for the Aruban government (Aruba Gobierno). The amount of civil servants who work in the public sector are 4222, this includes Dienst Openbare Werken (DOW) however excluding interns and ministers.

The nine department that will be approached are;

1. Ministry of General Affairs, Science, Innovation and Sustainability development; Aid Management Office Santa Cruz. This department has the highest



absenteeism rate in its department (22.30%). As a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total, this department has nine employees which all are women.

2. Ministry of Justice; Cuerpo Especial Arubano (CEA). This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (16.04%), as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total, this department has 26 employees; 19 women and 7 men
3. Ministry of Finance and Government organization; Departamento di Impuesto. This department has the highest absenteeism rate, (9.89%) as a result this department will be approached for this research. In total this department has 249 employees; 172 women and 77 men.
4. Ministry of Public Health, Elderly care and Sports; Service Inspection for Drugs. This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (11.98%) as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total this department has 41 employees; 15 women and 26 men.
5. Ministry of Regional Planning, Infrastructure and Integration: Service Technical Inspection. This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (13.31%) as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total this department has 147 employees; 21 women and 125 men.
6. Ministry of Economic Affairs, Communication, Energy and Environment; Office Rent and Consumer Protection. This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (15.22%) as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total this department has 68 employees; 47 women and 21 men.
7. Ministry of Tourism, Transport, Primary Sector, and Culture; Management Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (11.56%) as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In

total this department has 59 employees; 33 women and 26 men.

8. Ministry of Social Affairs, Youth and Labor; Department of Labor and Research. This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (12.23%) as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total this department has 37 employees; 8 women and 29 men.
9. Ministry of Education and Family Policy; Bibliotheca Nacional Arubano. This department has the highest absenteeism rate in its department (10.25%) as a result, this department will be approached for this research. In total this department has 15 employees; 10 women and 5 men.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

Subsequently, after collecting the questionnaires surveys, the variables are labeled and drawn together in data set by setting values for them. Afterward, a data base will be formed and the data will be directly entered into the computer software, a statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). By running preliminary analyzes using descriptive analysis, the computer software will describe the distribution of the variables based on frequencies of responses. It will summarize the means, mode, median, range and standard deviations. Furthermore, in order to test the hypotheses, variables will go through a Spearman correlation test, to evaluate the potential relationship between the variables such as; flexible work hour, family responsibility and gender, organizational commitments, and job satisfaction. Furthermore also examining the relationship between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, age, and absenteeism.

The data will then be analyzed and findings will be described. Lastly, the results of the study's hypotheses are predicted at a confidence level of 95% or higher and should have a significance p-value of lower than 0.05%

## 5. Quality

Before dealing with the details of question wording and answer formats it is vital to highlight some main principles that should be built into question design (De Vaus 2014). Therefore, the comprehensive quality of the study, validity and reliability is extremely important.

### 5.1 Validity

When conducting research, validity is of great significance to the researcher, in order to make correct conclusions with the data provided. Validity has been described as, “a valid measure is one which measures what it is intended to measure. It is not the measure that is valid or invalid but the use to which the measure is put” (De Vaus, 2014, p.51). A measure is accurate if it measures what it is proposed to measure, and it stays dependable without counting other factors.

In order to guarantee the validity of this study, the information collected is based on peer-reviewed studies. Furthermore, the instrument’s validity for this study is going to make use of the pre-validated measure. The dimensions of absenteeism such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and intrinsic job motivation are adapted to fit the study in the public sector of Aruba, which mainly come from (Warr et al., 1979). Moreover, the other dimension of absenteeism such as organizational commitment primarily comes from the study of Meyer et al., 1993 and other previous studies (Burton et al., 2002; Steel et al., 2007; Blau, 1986). Moreover, the survey will be conducted in Papiamentu and English for the civil servants in Aruba, since the majority of the civil servants speak and understand Papiamentu better. All the items of the survey will be translated from English to Papiamentu. The person who will be translating the survey from English to Papiamentu is being done by the researcher; however it will be revised and checked by a third independent person to guarantee accurate and valid translation.

According to de Vaus (2014, p.66), “a fundamental goal

of the research is to generalize to say something reliably about a wider population on the basis of the findings in a particular study”. For that reason generalization, especially statistical and replication is extremely important for the external validity of conducting research. As mentioned before, the sample will be done through a simple random sampling selection, in which every civil servant has an equal chance of being selected.

Lastly, it is essential to make sure that the sample size is sufficient to represent the population of the civil servants. As mentioned before the target sample size will consist of 347 public servants based on a population size of 4222 and a confidence level of 95%.

### 5.2 Reliability

In order to guarantee the reliability of the study, validated methods needs to be used for the collection and analysis procedure. As stated by the professor De Vaus (2014, p. 50), “the best way to create reliable indicators is to use multiple-item indicators”. For the reason, that they are more reliable and one can have easier methods of measuring their reliability.

A standardized instrument with consistent administration will be used for collecting data. The instrument that is going to be used consists of 7 variables, which are: absenteeism, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, family responsibility, flexible work hours, gender and age.

## 6. Expected Results

The expected results of this study are that individuals without family responsibility will report comparable levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction regardless of whether they observe flexible work hours to be present or not in their organizations (Scandura and Lankua, 1997, retrieved 2015). Thus, individuals that perceive flexible work hours will report higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than individuals who do not. Moreover, persons that perceive

flexible work hours will be greater for women than men and it will be greater for individuals with family responsibilities than those without (Scandura and Lankua, 1997). Job satisfaction will be positively correlated with organizational commitment (Mowday et al., 1979). Furthermore, research has shown a causal relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). With respect to individual and organizational outcomes, research has shown that organizational commitment is positively related to performance (Aranya, Kushnir, and Valency, 1986).

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The first time i heard of the UAUCU project was when I was doing my internship. The students that participated in the UAUCU of the year of 2015 came by for a field trip at the Department of the Economic Affairs. Then, in the beginning of the last year of our program Eric passed by in one of Luc's classes to give an explanation of the project. He explained to us that if we decided to participate in the project we would be working with a few students of the University of Aruba and we would basically work together but not together at the same time. So, we would not work together in the sense that we would work on our own research, but we would work together in the sense that we would help each other and give feedback to each other's work. Eventually, the project would be finalized with a book in which there will be a summary of the researches made by the students. I was intrigued by the project and I decided that I wanted to be part of it, mostly because I am not the one to be participating in such projects. I usually keep to myself, but

this project definitely had my interest, so I signed up. The very first meeting we had together was during the weekend at the beach to introduce ourselves to each other. It was a very pleasant morning in which we ate too much and got to know the students of Utrecht. The opening day of the project was on the following Monday and it was a successful day in which the Prime Minister came by for a small discussion. The UAUCU project consisted out of a few field trips and educational moments. The field trips were very interesting and fun. I learned a lot about certain things I never knew about that make a huge part of Aruba, for instance how sea water is transformed into drinking water for the island. Furthermore, the learning process of the research was very educational and informative. We received several lectures on different subjects regarding our researches. All in all, it was a very smart decision to be part of the UAUCU project, I learned a lot and I received feedback on my research from different people of which I'm very thankful for.

# Satisfaction of the 'Bezoldigingsregeling Ambtenaren'

Gianira Maduro

## Introduction

During the internship research made in a governmental institution it became clear that a problem for both employees and directors resides in the remuneration scheme of the public sector (Maduro, 2015). Employees feel as if their work is not being rewarded properly, and directors feel that the work being done by employees is not sufficient. Whether it is true for the director or the employee, it was shown that they are not satisfied with the current remuneration scheme in the public sector. The remuneration scheme in the public sector is known as the 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren' in Aruba. The 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren' explains thoroughly how the payment of the public sector is calculated. It explains the categories it has and how an employee's payment can differ depending on the education and experience that the employee has.

Seeing that the 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren' is an issue in the governmental institution, this topic was chosen to be researched. The objective of this research is to thoroughly explain the remuneration system of Aruba, the 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren', research the satisfaction level of employees and give recommendations on how to improve the satisfaction level of the public employees towards this system. As mentioned before, there are two sides to the issue of the remuneration scheme and researching the 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren' in depth

will make it clear where the issue(s) resides.

To facilitate this research a main research question was formulated, and to help answer this main research question a few sub-questions were formulated. The main research question is "How satisfied are public employees with their remuneration scheme ('bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren')?" There were in total three sub-questions formulated. The objectives of the sub-questions are to provide in depth information from which the main research question can be answered. The sub-questions are:

1. How is the present system of the 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren' composed?
2. To what degree is the present system (un)satisfying to the public employees?
3. Which dimensions show the strongest relationship with the pay satisfaction level?

The organization that will participate in this research will be the secondlargest governmental department; this information will be provided by the Department of Human Resources of the government (DRH). Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured throughout this research. The paper based questionnaires will be handed out to the employees of the organization. The respondents will be assured that their participation will lead to the success of this research and they will be rewarded with a small token of appreciation.



To be able to answer the main research question and the sub-questions a literature review was conducted to gather sufficient theory on the structure of a remuneration scheme and all the variables that are of influence to the remuneration scheme. The Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire conducted by Heneman & Schwab (1979) will be used to gather data. Lack of motivation or participation from the respondents can hinder the results of the research. The results expected from this research are that the remuneration scheme of the public sector is outdated and is not adequate anymore. The remuneration scheme has flaws and these flaws influence the employee's behavior towards their job. This has a negative effect at work because it can affect the positive employee (quality and efficiency of an employee towards their tasks) attitude and in turn will affect the successful performance of the organization (Waseem, 2010).

The structure of this thesis proposal is as follows: context, the importance of pay, pay satisfaction questionnaire, methodology, data collection, expected results, and last but not least the reference list.

### **Context:**

#### **Description of the present system 'Bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren'**

The present system of the public sector pay indicates that periodically the employee's salary will increase a little bit, up until it reaches its maximum in the correspondent scale ("schaal") for the function that the employee has. Every function consists of a few correspondent scales together with the number of years of service an employee has. This system is automatic. Thus, the employee's performance does not have any effect if the employee receives this increase in salary or not.

However, the performance of an employee is evaluated if the employee wants a promotion ("bevordering"). A promotion is when an employee wants to move from one correspondent scale to another one (higher one). This can be done within one's own function, up until the employee reaches the maximum correspondent scale in that function,

or it can be done by changing functions in order to fall in another correspondent scale. The process of receiving a promotion within the governmental system is a long process. The director of the organization has to hand in a petition to its Minister explaining that employee X asked for a promotion. The director of the department will have a meeting with the employee's supervisor in order to give a 'go' or 'no go' advice. Having data from performance appraisals is very important in this situation. By revising how the employee worked based on the goals set for the year and the requirements of the function the director decides if the employee will receive a 'go' or 'no go'. The director will then send its advice to the Minister. The Minister has the deciding power. The human resources department of the government has to handle the administrative part of the petition.

## **1. The Importance of Pay**

The following paragraphs will explain why pay is an important aspect of job satisfaction. Firstly, an explanation will be given about extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Secondly, a description of job satisfaction will be given.

### **Extrinsic and Intrinsic Rewards**

Pay is perceived to be a very important aspect of job satisfaction. Work values are an important aspect of job satisfaction because they contribute knowledge on the dimensions that are important to their work and this can have an impact on the productivity level of an employee. Kashefi (2005) explains that work values are put in two different categories of rewards that can be gained from a job. Kashefi (2005) distinguishes extrinsic and intrinsic rewards that are attached to job satisfaction. Extrinsic rewards are considered to be for instance income, and intrinsic rewards are considered to be for instance accomplishments. A difference in socio-demographic backgrounds and experiences in the workplace can lead to different perceptions of work values, thus,



extrinsic versus intrinsic values. Pay might be perceived as 'high value' when there is enough extrinsic rewards but intrinsic rewards are restricted. Kashefi (2005) explained that to be able to give intrinsic rewards a high value it is necessary that the extrinsic rewards give a perception of satisfaction first. This theory is called the taken-for-granted view. Furthermore, employees who receive a low income are more critical towards their remuneration scheme and thus perceive the satisfaction they receive from their remuneration scheme as important (Kashefi, 2005). However, for highly educated employees accomplishments are seen as more important than the income they receive. The reason being is that highly educated people have an easier opportunity to receive a higher income and thus would take extrinsic rewards for granted and give intrinsic rewards, such as accomplishments, a higher value. On the contrary, employees with low wages give more significance to their income because (most likely) their job require less skills and therefore, they perceive their income as lacking as opposed to employees with a higher income.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is defined as the psychological perspective an employee has regarding his work. The importance of job satisfaction relies in employee turnover. An employee that is satisfied will be more creative and committed to the organization and will perceive the organization and its job in a favorable manner (Masum, Azad & Beh, 2015; p.2). Job satisfaction is related to several variables, these are: competitive salary; job autonomy; good supervision and interpersonal relationships; training and development opportunities; better working conditions; and job security (Masum, Azad & Beh, 2015; p. 3). Of course an employee can be satisfied with one or more variables, but at the same time be dissatisfied with the other variable(s). The compensation package is viewed as the most important variable for the perception of job satisfaction of an employee towards its organization. The Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (MIT) recognized professional development and pay packages as the most important aspects of job satisfaction (Masum, Azad & Beh, 2015; p.3).

## **2. Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire**

This paragraph will explain the pay satisfaction questionnaire and it will give an explanation of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards which are connected to job satisfaction.

The relationship between what one wants from the work environment and the rewards of it is a viewpoint made by Locke (Heneman & Schwab, 1985); from which pay is seen as the most important reward (Heneman & Schwab, 1985; p.129). According to Heneman and Schwab (1985) a payment system contains four categories. These are: level, benefits, raises and structure (Heneman & Schwab, 1985; p.130). The category of 'level' is described as 'the individual's direct compensation' (Heneman & Schwab, 1985; p.130), thus the individual's wage or salary. The category of 'benefits' is described as an indirect form of payment through time not worked, insurance, pensions, income maintenance or other miscellaneous services. The category of 'raises' is described as the changes in the individual's pay level. The category of 'structure' is described as 'the hierarchical relationships created among pay rates for different jobs within the organization' (Heneman & Schwab, 1985; p.131). For an individual to receive a total compensation, all four categories must be evaluated correctly. Each category has a different set of policies and practices. For example: pay structure might be determined through a job evaluation, meanwhile a raise might be determined through job performance (Heneman & Schwab, 1985; p.131). Because the total compensation relies on four different categories and individual's vary in personal characteristics, individuals might score differently in these categories, which in turn explains the satisfaction (or perceived satisfaction and experience) that each individual might have with the four different categories.

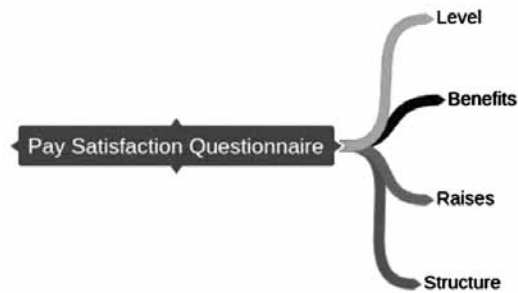


Figure I: Pay satisfaction questionnaire according to Heneman & Schwab.

The study Heneman & Schwab conducted made it clear that every category has an important role when it comes to the perception of pay satisfaction for an employee. However, two of the categories received 'strong support' (Heneman & Schwab, 1979; p.138), which means that these two categories have more of an impact than the other two. These categories are: level and benefits.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter will focus on the methodology of this research. The hypotheses made for this research is: 'Public employees are unsatisfied with the current remuneration scheme'. A description of the instruments, procedures and respondents will be given.

#### Instrument

The research design of this research is a survey. The tool that will be used to gather data is a questionnaire. Thus, this research will contain a quantitative approach. A questionnaire will be developed to be able to measure the satisfaction level of the public employees towards their remuneration scheme. The salary of a person is something very personal and taboo in the Aruban community. Handing out a questionnaire will make it easier for the respondents to answer as truthfully without being intimidated by the

consequences, thus, a questionnaire will provide more anonymity to the respondents.

#### Questionnaire

Heneman & Schwab (1979) categorized the PSQ into four sections: level, benefits, raises and structure. The questionnaire will contain all four categories. The questionnaire will have an extra section, which will be job satisfaction. The questions regarding job satisfaction will be derived from the work and life attitude survey that Warr, Cook, & Wall, (1979) designed. Only one section from this survey will be used for this research. The questionnaire will consist out of ten sections, with a total of 44 Likert-scaled answers: with the options of: very satisfied; satisfied; neutral; unsatisfied; very unsatisfied. The questionnaire will be paper based and self-administered, meaning that the researcher will visit the organization and hand out the questionnaires to the employees. The questionnaire will be available in two languages: Papiamentu and English. The questionnaire will take 5-7 minutes to fill in. The sections of the questionnaire will be:

- A. (6) General questions: questions regarding the profile of the respondent;
- B. (4) Level: questions regarding the satisfaction towards the level of the income;
- C. (4) Benefits: questions regarding the satisfaction towards the benefits received;
- D. (4) Raises: questions regarding the satisfaction towards the raises received;
- E. (6) Structure/administration: questions regarding the satisfaction towards the structure in which pay is administered;
- F. (15) Job satisfaction: questions regarding the employees satisfaction with its job;
- G. (4) Control on L,B,R,S/A: questions to control if what the respondents answered in section B, C, D & E are right/correct;
- H. (1) Other options: question on what other options there might be for compensation that is not a raise or

(monetary) promotion;

- I. (1) Additional remarks: this is an open question; the intention is that the respondent gives their opinion on the questionnaire itself, which could help with further research.

The risks that might be confronted when gathering data is lack of participation from the respondents; which in turn can hinder the results of this research. The data gathered will be put into SPSS. Conclusions will be drawn through the results of the test(s) done in SPSS. Based on the type of conclusions, the recommendations will be formed and given to the department in which the research was made and the human resources department of the government.

#### **Procedure**

The procedure of data collection for this research will entail a personal visit to the second largest governmental department. The purpose of the research and the questionnaire will be explained to the employees. The data collection will take place in the months of April and May of 2016. The questionnaire will be given out to be filled in immediately. A token of appreciation will be given to the participants to create a high response rate with honest answers.

#### **Respondents**

The respondents of this research will be from the second largest government department. It was chosen for the second largest department because the largest governmental department is the police department but they have a different remuneration scheme. However, it will ensure that the researcher will get sufficient data to make the research valid. This information will be provided by the human resources department of the government. This group will consist out of adults who have been working in the government for at least one year. The respondents are not required to have a certain level of education. The participants will be assured that their participation will

lead to the success of this research. To increase a higher response rate the researcher will visit the department in which the research will be conducted and inform the employees of the importance of this research and ask them to fill in the questionnaire immediately. The researcher will assure the participants that the collected data will be held with anonymity and confidentiality (Baarda et.al. 2013). Any information that will be distributed to the researcher will not be redistributed to a third party. Furthermore, the respondents will be thanked with a small token of appreciation, such as a cupcake or a cookie.

#### **4. Data analysis**

After collecting the data necessary for this research, the data needs to be analyzed. The data will be analyzed through SPSS.

#### **5. Expected results and recommendations**

Based on the results of the tests conducted through SPSS the researcher will draw its conclusions and recommendations. The main objective of this research was to measure the level of satisfaction of the employees who are part of the 'bezoldigingsregeling ambtenaren'. To do so, a main research question, sub-questions and hypotheses were made. As explained earlier there were two categories that were of importance to measure the satisfaction level. The expected results are that the employees are not satisfied with their remuneration scheme, specifically with the 'level' and 'benefits'. After data is collected and analyzed will it be clear if this is true or not and recommendations as to how to address this problem will be made.

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### **“Things are never quite what they seem”**

I feel it is impossible to describe my experience as a researcher in Aruba in a few words. As time passed on, the island started to be characterized by more and more facets. During the first weeks of performing research in Aruba, one of the first things that surprised me about the island was how easy it is to get in to contact with different people. This reminded me of the small villages that surrounded my parents house in the period where I was a child. Aruba sometimes felt as such a small village, where everybody knows each other and knows what the other has been up to. Besides that it was easy to get into contact with new persons, I was even more surprised by their overall willingness to cooperate with my research. What a difference with the Netherlands, where people are always so ‘busy’. Where, so to speak, appointments must be planned weeks ahead. I’m convinced that it would be much harder to perform a similar research in the same time-period in the Netherlands. The expected difficulty of performing research compared to Aruba, is accompanied by the fact “a nice weather makes everything better”. Though at sometimes it was too hot, a continuous breeze and a sea that is available at any time made it so much easier to work.

After living on the island for more than two months, I realized

that in Aruba, things are never quite what they seem. The stories of my respondents provided me with different perspectives on the economic, social and environmental development of the island. This picture literally changed during each new interview and participant observation. I forced myself not to take information for granted, by making ‘reality checks’ after each interview and observation. However, the more I enacted these ‘reality checks’ the more I became confused. How is it possible that the government of Aruba states that it wants to become 100% sustainable in 2020 by only focussing on the energy sector? How can it ever become sustainable and “green” when the landfill is lighted on fire almost every day? Where the mangrove area right next to it is filled with plastic bags and where nothing will grow for the upcoming 100 years? How can the island become sustainable and “green” when literally 10 minutes from the highly polluted Parkietenbos, the shiny coastline of Oranjestad with all its fancy hotels and tourist shops appear?

As much as I tried to stay mentally detached from the mentioned contradictions, soon something became very obvious; it is impossible to be 100% objective as a researcher. This became anecdotally clear when one day I realized how the interviews and participant observations unconsciously changed my decisions in daily life. After hearing about, and seeing with my own eyes, the nature destruction of the island, I somehow decided to re-use not only the standard plastic bags, but also bread bags. I started to re-use bread bags by cleaning them with water and bond them onto the clothesline outside.

Besides the contradictions and changing perspectives, one thing became very manifest. That is that a small proportion of the Aruban society, namely the respondents of this research, are very motivated to make Aruba a better place for the future generations. I am truly inspired by having seen and heard a manifold of their individual and collective engagements in sustainability. I am enlightened by their creative engagements, even though many of them are clearly frustrated as a result of perceived issues on the island. Their stories are captured in this research. I hope they inspire the government of Aruba as much as it inspired me.

I would like to thank all the persons who have put their effort and time in helping me with my research. A special thank goes out to Bobby Spier, who not only turned out to be a true mentor while performing research in Aruba, but also a much appreciated friend. I would also like to thank Eric Mijts and Jocelyn Ballantyne especially, by giving me the opportunity to conduct research in Aruba in the first place. Another special thanks goes out to Anthony Hagendoorn, who inspired me with his passion and love for the island and its nature the first time me and the other students were sailing with him. Edward Erasmus and Daphne Agius Cesareo-Lejuez: thank you for your constant support during my research. I am convinced that my research findings would not be the same without your valuable advise and information.

# “The Sexiness of Sustainability”

## Perspectives Towards Sustainability of Aruban Citizens

Mirjam Snitjer

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The ‘sexiness’ of sustainability

The definition of sustainability has changed over time. During 1980, the central idea of sustainability focussed on natural resources with the World Conservation Strategy’s definition (IUCN 1980). This focus moved in the years after that to the now widely accepted definition of the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987). The Report views sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987: 16). An examination of relevant literature in the area of sustainability indicates how some authors tend to use the definition of the Brundtland Report to describe sustainability, instead of using it to describe sustainable development.

The lack of a clear separation between sustainability and sustainable development refers to the fact that sustainability is often criticized, since it lacks a theoretical framework (Giddens et al. 2002, Spier 2014). The result of a lack of theoretical framework is that sustainability can be used as a ‘traveling package’. Tsing (2005) recognizes the formation of ‘universals’ in the political and economic sphere. These ‘universals’ are as a traveling package transported to local settings by political actors. The travel aspect of sustainability is the reason that universals like sustainability or sustainable development receive different treatments in different local contexts.

Lacking a theoretical framework can result in a form of ‘meaningless’. Sustainability is like a ‘motherhood and apple-pie’, in that it sounds so good that everybody can agree with it, whatever their own interpretation (cf. Giddens et. al 2002). Sustainability often refers to a balance between *people, planet and profit* (3 p’s). However, how can these dimensions be measured? There are no universal standards to do so. Besides the problem of measuring the 3 p’s, when is it possible to speak of a balance between the 3 dimensions? How can one define planet, as one of the 3 p’s? Does this consist out of the environment, and if so; is it mainly related to nature, or also to the interconnection with humans? (Franks 1996).

Sustainability is also a ‘sexy’ concept. Over the former years, sustainability is widely used in the field of policy making. The popularity of sustainability is visible in our current century, where not only businesses and organizations use the concept of sustainability more, but also governments, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, such as the UN. Many governments have decided to place sustainability on their political agenda.

#### 1.2 Sustainability in Aruba

The assumption that there are many different interpretations to be given for sustainability is acknowledged by zooming in to the specific context of Aruba. Sustainability in the context of Aruba can first be illustrated by shining light at the government practices of the island.



### *1.2.1 The usage of sustainability in a top-down policy*

In Aruba, sustainability received its first, fullest attention in 2008. During this year, the political party *Movimiento Electoral di Pueblo* (MEP) was leading a project called *Nos Aruba 2025*. The goal of the project was to strive for a sustainable development of the Aruban society by collaborating with different stakeholders and by engaging in several areas.

In 2009, sustainability regained attention by the government of the island through the creation the 2020-Vision program. This time, the focus is on producing sustainable energy. The ambition of the program is to become 100% independent of fossil fuel in 2020. While focusing on the energy sector, at the same time the 2020-Vision program stresses the fact that it wants to connect the 3 p's. The following statements makes the connection clear: "with national programs "Bo Aruba" and "Bo Bario" Aruba is setting physical and social building blocks for enhanced quality of life and a new vision of social participation; setting a proper balance between these vital dimensions of what it means to be human and how we relate to our environment" (2020-Vision 2015: 3). A result of the focus on energy while also striving to connect the 3 p's results in an ambiguity of the interpretation of sustainability.

### *1.2.1 The usage of sustainability in bottom-up initiatives*

In addition to a number of top-down approaches used by the Government of Aruba to underscore the importance of sustainability, an increasing amount of bottom-up initiatives can be identified in the Aruban community. Many of these utilize social media platform such as Facebook to communicate their interest. One of the online groups that shows interest for the concept is the *Aruba Sostenibel - Think Tank Facebook* group. This group portrays how the currently 369 members are engaged in the area of sustainability by the fact that the group uses the concept of sustainability as a title (in Papiamentu). The *Aruba Sostenibel - Think Tank Facebook* group describes itself as followed:

*"A group that brainstorms ideas for a platform where information can be distributed on how to stimulate innovation, become less fossil fuel dependent and lead a sustainable life in Aruba" (Aruba Sostenibel - Think Tank 2016).*

A result of this description and the title of the group suggests that the members have certain perceptions of sustainability. These can differ per member.

### *1.2.3 Sustainability and the diversity in the Aruban society*

The third way in which in the context of Aruba the assumption that there are many different interpretations to be given for sustainability can be acknowledged, is by looking at the characteristics of the Aruban society. It can be stated that the Aruban society is most characterized by its diverse population. The diversity becomes clear through noticing how in 2015, 64,6% of the Aruban society consisted out of persons who were born in Aruba. In that same year, the Central Bureau of Statistics measured that 35,5% of Aruban citizens was born in foreign countries. The diversity of the Aruban society is accompanied by a rapidly increase in the population rate, most of which was caused by waves of immigration (CBS 2002).

In 2015, the percentage of Aruban citizens who are 65 years old or older was 13,1%. The amount of people who in 2010 were registered in Aruba as Roman-Catholic was 80,8%. In 2010, almost half of the Aruba society consisted out of 18 to 24 year old people. In 2016, 47,4% of the Aruban society is male and 52,6% is female (Country Meters 2016). Looking at the area of education in Aruba, most Aruban students go to MAVO and an intermediate bridge class for HAVO, MAVO and VWO after having finished their primary education (CBS 2013). A very small proportion ends up in the tertiary educational system of Aruba.

The diversity in nationalities, ethnicities, age, religion, education and gender of Aruban citizens all contribute to a



variety in interpretations and definitions that can be given for sustainability.

#### *1.2.4 Sustainability and the vulnerability of Aruba*

It is questionable to what extent Aruba can be regarded as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) (Peterson 2011, cf. CBS 2009, cf. Baldacchino 2008). Despite this lack of clarity, Aruba does share certain characteristics with SIDS. These characteristics are formed by vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities that are central to this research are the environmental and economic challenges. As a result of its strong reliance on the tourism sector, the island has a small economy. Moreover, the island is characterized by a fragile marine environment, as well as a vulnerable island ecosystems (cf. Spier 2014). The economic and environmental vulnerabilities of Aruba are typical characteristics of SIDS (cf. Kelman et. al 2009; cf. Douglas 2006; cf. Encontre 1999; cf. Briguglio 1995; cf. Pelling & Uitto 2001).

Hearing the perceptions of sustainability of different Aruban citizens, and using these in the policy-making that is enacted by the Aruban government, is especially in the context of Aruba of importance. Through hearing the different perceptions of sustainability, local realities and needs come forward that are related to issues of sustainability. These local realities and needs can be used to formulate a clear, national interpretation of sustainability. In turn, the national interpretation can be used in the sustainable development policy of Aruba and will have a greater, positive impact on the overall vulnerability of the island, since the policy will be characterized by public support.

A consequence of not hearing and using the local needs and realities of Aruban citizens concerning sustainability, is that the chance of a 'technical fix' policy increases. The 'fix' can negatively influence the overall vulnerability of the island. A 'technical fix' policy is characterized by authorities that treat symptoms of issues of sustainability, instead of focussing on real causes and related issues (cf. Giddens et. al 2002, cf. Kelman 2003).

### **1.3 Formation of perceptions**

As has been mentioned, sustainability can be seen as a 'traveling package' through its transport to local settings by political actors (cf. Tsing 2005). The transportation of sustainability to the local context of Aruba by the government of Aruba has now been elaborated. However, I state that sustainability as a 'package' can also travel in a personal sphere. In this personal sphere, sustainability can be transported to local, personal settings by interactions with different people, as well as by the emergence of certain events or circumstances. Since there is a wide range of interpretations and perceptions that can be given for sustainability and the Aruban society is characterized by diversity, it is essential to see how the personal perceptions of sustainability of Aruban citizens are formed.

### **1.4 Research questions**

This research will answer the following main question: *What are the perceptions formulated by the members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group towards sustainability and how are these translated into their decisions in daily life?*

To answer this main research question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

1. How can the members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group be described in terms of their gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, education level, socio-economic status and religion?
2. How do members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group describe sustainability?
3. How are the personal perceptions of sustainability of the members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group formed?
4. Why are the members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group engaged in sustainability?
5. Are the members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group aware of the 2020-Vision program? If so: in what ways?

6. How are the former 5 questions applicable to non-members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group?

### 1.5 Relevance

The research is deemed relevant to the Aruban community in its widest sense, as it provides insight into the manners in which perceptions towards sustainability are being formulated. Accordingly, a profound understanding on how the formulation of perceptions are translated into daily life decisions can serve as an important starting point to developing a shared definition of sustainability, to be applied by all relevant actors in society. To address the island's vulnerability, it is of great importance to reach consensus of the definition. Lastly, this research can provide valuable information about the personal motivations to engage in sustainability and personal limitations that might come along.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 First steps

The location of this research exists out of two parts. The first one is an online part, formed by the Facebook page of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank group. I have visited and will continue visiting this online world multiple time, since it is the location that is the most important shared characteristic of the respondents. Therefore, the usage of *online media* is crucial for this research. Through using *online media* it became possible to perform the first important step in this research: getting a clear picture of the research population. Getting a clear first picture was possible by becoming a member of the Facebook group myself. Besides receiving information about characteristics of respondents by using *online media*, online media was used to get in contact with respondents. Members of the Facebook group were invited for an interview via Facebook.

### 2.2 Interview

Two methods of interviewing were used. The first one

is *semi-structured interviewing* (Bryman 2008). *Semi-structured interviewing* entails conducting interviews where topics and questions without a specific order are discussed. Using the method of *semi-structured interviewing* means that a form of flexibility becomes possible. This flexibility is an advantage, since I expect that every member will provide me with very specific, personal information. Another advantage of the flexibility of *semi-structured interviewing* is that it enables me to adapt the structure and content of my questionnaires to the results of the analysis. The adaption is central for my research, since my general goal is to go into depth with the stories of the members.

Besides *semi-structured* interviewing, *life-history* interviews were used. Through making use of *life-history* interviewing, the aim was pointed at receiving information on the entire biography of each respondent (Bryman 2008: 196). Using the *life-history* interview provided a deeper understanding of the historical, societal and cultural aspects of the lives of the respondents that can have contributed to his or her current perceptions, priorities, actions, interests and actions in the area of sustainability. In total, 26 interviews were conducted.

### 2.3 Snow-ball method

The *snow-ball* method has been used after each interview, where I asked the former respondent if he or she can advise me to talk to other resident of Aruba who engages in sustainability and is currently living in Aruba. As a result of using the *snow-ball* method, I was able to interview several Aruban residents who are not a member of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group. I have decided to use the information of the non-members in the final analysis. The reason for this is because the non-members can provide new insights in perceptions of sustainability and the actions that are performed that might translate these insights. However, a sub-question is made to make a clear separation between those respondents who are and who are not a member of the Facebook group. The information of non-members is not used for this specific, first analysis.

## 2.4 Research strategy

The research strategy of this research is a qualitative research (Bryman 2008). A *bottom-up* approach is used, by focusing on citizen engagements in the area of sustainability, of which the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group forms the most important collective citizen engagement of this research.

## 2.5 Verification, validation

The usage of *online media*, *informal conversations*, *interviews* and the snow-ball method have helped to become a part of the lives of the respondents. Moreover, it helped to get a deeper understanding of their lives. Using other methods than *interviews* helped to verify the data was received during the *interviews* as well. Checking the information that was gained during interviews with the methods of *observation* and *participation observation* enabled me to increase the validity of my research. The methods of observation and participant observation were used in the following ways:

1. Volunteering during a project of ArubaDoet;
2. Volunteering during the P3a UN Conference in Oranjestad;
3. Walking with one of the respondents through a nature area;
4. Walking with one of the respondents through the mangrove area next to Parkietenbos.

These participant observations have especially helped me to become a part of the second location of this research: the offline world, existing out of Aruba.

## 3. Preliminary results

### 3.1 Respondent characteristics

I have conducted 26 interviews. Before any other results are presented, it is crucial to see which factors characterize the research population. The factors that characterize the respondents of this research and are of most importance for interpretation of further outcomes, are:

- Birthplace: 17 respondents are born in Aruba;
- of the respondents have lived in Aruba for less than 10 years;
- Those respondents who are not born in the Netherlands have lived abroad for several years;
- Marital status and children: more than half of the respondents is married and nearly all the married respondents have one or more children. 8 respondents do not have a relationship.

The population of this research turns out to be not representative for the overall Aruban society. There are three reasons for this:

#### 1 Education

The respondents of this research have a significant higher education than most Arubans. More than half of the respondents have finished their Bachelor degree in University and almost half of them have finished their Master Degree. This amount is a significant difference with the overall Aruban society, where most Aruba students who have finished their primary education go to MAVO and an intermediate bridge class for HAVO, MAVO and VWO (CBS 2013). A very small proportion ends up in the tertiary educational system of Aruba.

#### 2 Employment

26 respondents are employed. This outcome is a contradiction with the overall Aruban society. Research shows how in 2010, more than one third of Aruban citizens who are older than 15 years turn out to be unemployed (Aruba Economic Affairs 2016). If in 6 years there has been little change in the unemployment rate then it can be assumed that this trend has continued after 2010.

#### 3 Occupation

The respondents of this research work in work in different job-sectors than most Arubans. The two job sectors where most of the respondents are currently working in is the *governmental* sector, followed by the *environmental and agricultural sector*.

After that, the job sector where most of the respondents are active in are *education and teaching and creative arts and design*. In 2007, 18,9% of the Aruba population, age unknown, are “service workers and shop and market sales workers” (CBS 2007). This group forms the occupation were in that year most Aruba residents were employed.

### 3.2 Perceptions of sustainability

One of the first questions that was asked of the respondents was: “How would you describe sustainability?” According to most respondents, sustainability is about:

- Caring for the future generations, through:
- Being careful with natural resources;
- An awareness that every action counts;
- The world;
- Aruba, with an emphasizes on socio-economic structures, nature and collaboration.

The formation of the perceptions of sustainability turned out to determine the motivations of most of the respondents to translate their perceptions into their decisions in daily life. To understand the link between the formation of perceptions and the motivations to engage in sustainability, an outie of the decisions in the daily life of the respondents will first be provided.

### 3.3 Decisions in daily life

The perceptions of sustainability are translated into decisions in the daily lives of the respondents in two ways. Which are individual engagements and social engagements. Individual engagements

Being active in the area of sustainability through individual engagements entail engagements that are performed without sharing this specific action with other persons. In other words, in this performance there is no direct contact with other persons. Almost all the respondents perform individual engagements of sustainability through handling nature in a frugal way. Recycling and re-using are very common individual engagements. Examples of individual engagements that most respondents mentioned are:

1. Recycle materials;
2. Reduce energy;
3. Having installed, or being in the process of installing, sun-panels.

The order of numbers shows the most heard answers. These individual engagements link to a frugal treatment of nature, since the usage of energy and materials can impact the nature of the island. More specifically, it can impact the environmental vulnerability of Aruba.

#### *Collective engagements*

At this stage of analysing the research results, it is too early to conclude in which areas most collective engagements are performed. It does appear as if the importance of caring for nature keeps playing a role in collective engagements. As will be elaborated later, by performing collective engagements, many respondents feel that they are taking collective responsibility since in their view the government of Aruba is lacking this. Being active in the area of sustainability through collective engagements entails engagements where:

1. Information of sustainability or concerns concerning this subject are shared with at least one other person, or:
2. Where the respondent is active in a community with people who share these concerns and information without necessarily talking about the concerns and information.

Most respondents perform collective engagements in the following ways:

1. In the case the respondent has a child: raising his or her child with ideas of recycle, reduce and separating garbage;
2. Using their work to translate their perceptions of sustainability;
3. Performing volunteer work through helping nature and society;
4. Facebook: commenting on specific messages in a group where the subject of talk is the environment of Aruba;

The order of numbers show the most heard answers.

### 3.4 Formation of perceptions

As has been mentioned, the formation of the perceptions of sustainability is determining the motivations of most respondents to engage in sustainability. The engagements of sustainability have now been provided. The next question that must be asked now is: how are the perceptions of sustainability of the respondents formed?

#### Time and place

In the formation of perceptions of sustainability, a time and place aspect became visible. The time and place aspect can be specified into two categories. The first category is:

##### 1 Fixed time and place

The *fixed time and place* category is a category that provides the respondents with a basic framework of norms and values. These norms and values have become a fundamental part of the personality of the respondent. The norms and values have created an awareness of broad socio-economic issues and the importance of nature. Moreover, the norms and values of a fixed time and place are in general created at a young age. The norms and values are formed through two broad life experiences. Almost all respondents mentioned that one of these life experiences have contributed to their perceptions of sustainability.

##### Childhood

The ways in which the childhood of the respondent has played a role in the formation of perceptions of sustainability are:

1. The natural environment in which some of the respondents were raised. Through this, a form of respect and passion evolved for nature;
2. The upbringing of the parents. Examples of the norms and values that were passed on to the respondent are: respect for living creatures, being frugal with everything and the importance of being open as a person;
3. The time-period in which the respondent is raised as a

child and youngster. For some of the respondents, this time-period is the '60's and '70's of the former century, where ideals such as respect for nature and striving for a balance between nature and society were spread.

##### Education

Education contributed to the perceptions of sustainability for some of the respondents. The importance of education was only mentioned by respondents who have finished their studies in the area of environmental studies and economics.

##### 2 Moving time and place

Paramount in this second category that has contributed to the perceptions of sustainability is the role of *visibility*. In other words, through 'using their eyes', respondents are able to make comparisons with and in Aruba over time. A difference with the *fixed time and place category* is that the *moving time and place category* appears to create a form of awareness of the specific context of Aruba and at a later age. The second category can be specified in two subcategories:

##### -Moving time

##### *Literally seeing difference*

As has been elaborated, a small group of respondents lived less than ten years in Aruba. A consequence of living more than ten years in Aruba is that respondents literally see the changes that Aruba is undergoing in a rapid pace. The most heard example of these fast visible changes in Aruba is nature destruction of the island.

##### *Noticing a difference*

Another consequence of living more than ten years in Aruba is that over a longer period, for some respondents changes in the socio-economic structure of the island becomes visible as well. The most heard socio-economic problems that the respondents perceived were:

- A low education level of the Aruban society;
- A further segregation between rich and poor;

- An apparent prioritizing of the tourist sector by the government of Aruba;
- A disappearance of the Aruban culture;
- Many Aruba residents who depend on the Aruban state to make a living.

#### *Social media*

Social media turned out to be very important for most respondents to see the environmental problems of the island. Several Aruba residents post videos or photos of the nature destruction that appears in the island on a regular basis.

#### *Positive aspect of social media*

Furthermore, besides the negative changes that are visible via social media, social media also presents a positive change for some respondents. According to the respondents, this change entails noticing that online, more and more Aruban residents seem to be interested in the nature that is still left on the island. Some of the respondents who mentioned this positive change said how this change motivates them to engage even more in sustainability.

The positive change is also visible by using the method of participant observation. This method has been elaborated in the former chapter. Through having become a part of the online world of the respondents, I have noticed how there is an increase in online Facebook groups that are active in subjects related to sustainability. Examples of these subjects are permaculture and cleaning up beaches.

-Moving place

#### *Media*

Almost all respondents compared Aruba with other countries. They all mentioned how far Aruba is behind compared to other countries, when looking at innovative ways that can make Aruba more sustainable. Some respondents compared Aruba with other countries through reading news-articles online or offline.

#### *Traveling, working and studying abroad*

Comparing Aruba with other countries was mostly done via personal experiences of traveling, studying and living abroad. Since almost all the respondents have lived, worked or studied in the Netherlands, many made the comparison between the Netherlands and Aruba. According to those respondents who made this comparison, the Netherlands are far ahead when looking at sustainable, innovative projects and ideas.

#### *Standard issues*

So far, perceived differences on the island of Aruba have been mentioned. Besides these differences, respondents mentioned issues that do not necessarily relate to a perceived difference. These standard issues are not necessarily part of a difference but do influence the motivations of respondents. The standard issues are:

- A high political sensitivity that prevents cooperation and collaboration between citizens and governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- In general, respondents feel as if the government is not facilitating enough (financial and informative) incentives to support citizens to fulfil their ideas of sustainability;
- A lack of transparency of the government of Aruba concerning projects and priorities;
- How in general, most Aruban residents are not interested in engaging in sustainability and related ideas;
- High prices of food and a strong dependence on food import;
- The low education level of most Aruba residents that creates all sorts of problems.

### **3.5 Motivations**

What can be concluded so far, is that the personal formations of sustainability can be specified into two categories: a *fixed time and place* aspect and a *moving time and place* aspect. In this starting phase of analysing all research results, it is too

early to state which specific formations lead to motivations to individually engage in sustainability.

However, it has become clear that most collective engagements are determined by a combination of a *fixed time and place* aspect and a *moving time and place* aspect. Especially the *moving time and place* aspect appears to be of importance to perform collective engagements in the area of sustainability. The moving time and place aspect creates an awareness of the perceived social-economic and environmental issues of Aruba. Concerning perceived social-economic issues, many respondents referred to the role of the government in these issues.

As has been elaborated, visibility is crucial in the process of forming an awareness of the specific context of Aruba. The framework for the visibility is the fact that most respondents live on the island for a period longer than ten years.

### **3.6 Link between perceptions of sustainability, formations of perceptions and motivations to socially engage in sustainability**

Two examples will be provided that show how social engagements in sustainability are most often determined by a mix of a *fixed time and place* and a *moving time and place* aspect.

#### Respondent A

This respondent lives in Aruba for more than 30 years. He has been brought up in the Netherlands during the '60's of the former century. He describes sustainability as:

*“Through being on the island [Aruba] for more than 30 years, I can see that the island is out of balance. There is no balance between welfare and wellbeing. There is no balance between the environment and the economic development of the island” (translated from Dutch).*

When asking how the perceptions of sustainability of this respondent are formed, the respondent explains how his parents brought him up with certain religious ideals.

*“The religious aspect is that my parents always had this idea of fairness. Stand up for the weak people in society. Stand up for minorities. Have respect for everything that lives.”*

Besides the influence of his parents, the time-period in which this respondent was raised also plays a significant role in how his perceptions of sustainability are formed.

*“I was raised during the ‘flowerpower’ of the ‘60’s. I have been influences by this period through my older sisters. Values as a balance between humans and the earth, having respect for nature and justice were important in this period. It was passed on to me via my sisters”.*

This respondent tries to translate his perceptions of sustainability through writing books. The respondent shows how the formation of perceptions of sustainability form a motive to engage in sustainability through the following phrase:

*“My [scientific] books are about culture, history, identity. I write these books out of standpoints that are very closely linked to the ideals that are formed during my Dutch youth”.*

To conclude, this respondent shows how two events have formed his perceptions of sustainability. The first event is his child period, where certain ideals and values were formed. The ideals and values have become part of his character, it has created a strong framework of personal norms and values. More specific, this framework exists out of a certain awareness of human relations and nature. The second event that has formed the perceptions of sustainability of this person is the fact that he lives in Aruba for more than 30 years. A result of living for more than 30 years in Aruba is that he literally is seeing (environmental) problems in Aruba. Besides literally seeing problems, this respondent is also noticing (socio-economic) problems over a longer period of time.



These two events, thus formations, form a motive to collectively engage in sustainability.

### Respondent B

This respondent is living in Aruba his entire life. He has been brought up in a natural environment and is on the waters of Aruba every day. This respondent describes sustainability as:

*“Garbage, using garbage for fuel. That is the whole goal. Some countries have made a good business out of garbage. We’re stuffed with garbage on this island.”*

When asking how the perceptions of sustainability of this respondent are formed, the respondent explains how two events have contributed to this. First, his work demands that he is on the water every day. Through being on the water every day, the respondent is literally seeing the changes in the environment of Aruba.

*“Now and then, the wind changes of direction. Then the neighbours have trouble with that. But it doesn’t happen every day. What I see, what’s happening on the sea...if you sail pass it...it’s just alarming you know.”*

The second event that has contributed to his perceptions of sustainability is the natural environment in which he was brought up as a child.

*“I was always on the water. As a kid, I was always sailing. I was always a bit of a ‘green energy movement’. I’ve been brought up on the sea, on the Caribbean sea. That is supposed to be very clean. And I see a change in that.”*

This respondent tries to translate these perceptions of sustainability through posting videos and photos of the nature destruction on Facebook.

*“I just speak my mind. I’m frustrated about this whole thing. It is an occurrence that happens every day...through*

*being active on social media, I try to show how it affects our wildlife, our birds, our reefs. I try to pass it on.”*

To conclude, this respondent explains how his perceptions of sustainability are formed, first, by living in Aruba his whole life. For quite some time, this respondent has the same job, that demands him to be on the waters of Aruba every day. A result of being on the waters of Aruba every day for quite some time, is that this respondent is literally seeing the change in the nature of the island. He can compare the state of the environment of Aruba with the state that it had a few years ago. Moreover, through being brought up on the sea as a child, he has created certain norms and values concerning the environment. It is clear that a healthy environment has become very important for this respondent. Moreover, through being brought up on the sea, he can compare the state of the Caribbean sea in general with the state of the Caribbean sea that is spread around Aruba.

### **3.7 Other reasons to motivate**

Almost half of the respondents mentioned two other motivations to engage in sustainability. These motivations are not mentioned as a part of the formation of perceptions of sustainability. Still, they are an important, extra reason to engage in sustainability. The two other reasons to engage in sustainability are:

#### 1 Having children

Almost all the respondents who have children mentioned that through engaging in sustainability, they want to provide a better future for their own children. An example of engaging in sustainability in order to provide a better future for their children can be raising their children with ideas of reduce and recycle.

#### 2 Getting a “good feeling” out of the engagements

Some respondents mentioned how getting a “good feeling” out of engagements in sustainability is another motivation to engage in this area. Examples can be found in individual as well as social engagements.

#### 4. Conclusion

The main question of this research is: *What are the perceptions formulated by the members of the Aruba Sostenibel – Think Tank Facebook group towards sustainability and how are these perceptions translated into their decisions in daily life? Until now, the following can be stated.*

It is important to start with stating that the results of this research are not applicable for the overall Aruban society. The reason for this is because the Aruban population and the population of this research differ most on their educational level and the job sector that they are currently working in.

Most respondents describe sustainability in a similar way. Nevertheless, these descriptions do not provide concrete information about the *perceptions* that the respondents have of sustainability. To be able to see which perceptions the respondents have, the formation of perceptions plays a crucial role. As it turns out, the formations of perceptions determine for a great part the motivations respondents have to engage in sustainability.

In order to know more about the perceptions and formations of sustainability, an outline of engagements in sustainability has been provided. All respondents are active in sustainability through individual and collective engagements. Individual engagements are mostly enacted through being frugal with the environment of Aruba. Collective engagements are linked to the environment as well, but they are also linked to perceived responsibilities of the government of Aruba in the area of the society and economy of Aruba.

This research has shown how individual and collective engagements in sustainability are often motivated by a mix of formations of perceptions of sustainability. These formations are created via two broad *time and place* aspects. To engage in collective engagements of sustainability, an awareness of the specific situation of Aruba appears to be needed. Through a form of visibility, the specific situation of Aruba is described in terms of perceived environmental

and socio-economic problems. These problems become visible by literally seeing and figurally noticing a difference in Aruba over time. Social media and media in general play an important role in creating visibility.

Further analysis of the collected data will shed light on which specific formations of perceptions of sustainability result in motivations to individually and collectively engage in sustainability. Moreover, further analysis will give an overview of the creative solutions that the respondents provided for perceived environmental and socio-economic issues of the island. It would also be interesting to see how the perceptions of sustainability provided by the members of the Aruba Sostenibel –Think Tank Facebook group differ from the perceptions that come forward in the 2020-Vision program.

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### **An educational holiday – a day from my diary**

*“This vacation I would still like to climb ‘De Hooiberg’ ”* In the last three months, sentences like this were not unusual for me. Even though I spent a lot of time on my research, I still catch myself saying “this vacation...”, as if my stay on Aruba is a holiday.

08:00 – For me, a normal day in Aruba starts with breakfast in the morning sun. However, this breakfast is not like any breakfast I would have in the Netherlands. There is a little challenge when eating your breakfast in Aruba; while you are eating muesli with milk, the wind blows the milk from your spoon!

09:00 – After my challenging breakfast, I go to the University of Aruba together with my roommates. In the first weeks we went by foot or bicycle, but now we have become real Arubans and go by car.

10:00 – At the University, Eric and the Aruban students help us with our research and answer questions about the Aruban context. Thank you all for this.

12:30 – Shortly after twelve, I go to an interview that I planned only one day in advance. I am very thankful for the quick responses of my respondents. These interviews are one by one valuable for my research.

15:00 – After my interview, I come back home a little bit later than I expected. This is because the battery of the car was empty. I want to thank everyone who helped me start my car.

17:00 – Once home, my roommates are dancing and singing, using kitchenware as a microphone. I would like to thank my roommates for these fun moments.

18:00 - We decide to go to the beach to enjoy the last rays of sunlight. I would like to thank my roommates for these relaxing moments too.

19:30 - At the end of the day we are making dinner with vegetables from the local ‘fruteria’. After dinner, we are running at the linear park.

22:00 – Back home, I am having a conversation with a roommate about her interview results from today. It is interesting to compare and discuss our findings.

23:00 – After drinking a glass of wine in the garden, it is time for bed.

To put it briefly, I would like to say that a normal day in Aruba is very pleasant. I enjoyed both the research and the moments during our time off. I am thankful for being a part of this research collaboration program. For me, this whole experience feels like an educational holiday.

# The utility and waste management sector in the 2020 vision of Aruba

## the relation between participation and support

Anniek van Wezel

### 1. Introduction

The world is currently responsible for providing food, water and shelter for 7.4 billion people (Navo, 2011 ; Wordometers, 2016). The expectation for the end of this century is that the number of people in the world will be increased between 2 and 5 billion (Rijnvis, 2014). This population growth increases the demand for basic necessities, but as a result of the climate change, those facilities are under pressure (NATO, 2011). In addition to the basic necessities, there is also a need for energy for the economic growth in both the post-industrial, industrial and recently industrialized countries. The population and economic growth constitutes a challenge for governments and society. According to a report by the British Institution of Mechanical Engineer (IME), titled *“Population: One planet, Too many People?”*, predicted problems could be solved with known techniques and a sustainable approach (NATO, 2011). That means that we would not have to wait for new technologies.

A sustainable approach is a way to tackle global challenges. The World Commission on Environment and Development describes in the Brundtland Report sustainable development as follows: *“a development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the future generations to do the same”* (Brundtland, cited in Paredis, 2001, p. 34). Global challenges hold even stronger for small

islands, because they encounter their limits more quickly. Small islands are dependent on tourism, oil (for power generation) and international trade (Spier, 2015). These small islands are also called Small Island Developing State (SIDS). Aruba is one of those.

To reduce vulnerability, build resiliency and improve economic growth, the Aruban government has drawn up a clear vision. Aruba has set course to transition towards 100% fossil fuel independence by 2020 (Antiliaans Dagblad, 2015). Some steps have already been taken. A wind farm currently generates 24.8% of Aruba’s electricity and the solar panels on the Aruban airport produce 3% of the electricity (Antiliaans Dagblad, 2015 ; WEB). Currently, the Government is working on changing the site allocation plan in order to build a second wind farm (interview ministry of General Affairs, 2016).

#### 1.1 Problem definition

The incumbent Government has launched the 2020-vision in 2009 under the guidance of Mike Eman. The wind farm and the solar panels at the airport provide almost 28% of the sustainable energy in Aruba. At the end of 2016, the second wind farm is expected to be built. This makes 50% of the Aruban energy renewable. These are big steps, but to be fully sustainable by 2020 other semi-public organizations, private organizations and citizens must support the

2020-vision as well. Spier (2015) used interviews to investigate the support of the Aruban population for the government's vision. She has indicated that the citizens do not fully support the 2020 vision. According to Spier (2015), this can be explained by the fact that the government introduced it *top-down*, whereas a part of the population prefers a *bottum-up* participation. The doubt among the citizens hinders the implementation of a sustainable model (Spier, 2015). Now the question remains whether relevant organizations support the 2020 vision. The objective to be fully sustainable cannot only be achieved by public bodies. Semi-public and private organizations should contribute to this goal as well. This thesis investigates the role of utility and waste management companies in the policy making process and the support of these organizations towards the 2020 vision.

### 1.2 Objective and research question

As described above, the Government will not be able to reach the vision without support. Apart from the population the utility and waste management companies must also be willing to contribute to sustainability. On the basis of a two-part main question; the relationship between the roles of the organizations in creating policies for the 2020 vision and the support for its process and content will be analyzed.

The main research question is the following:

*“What is, for organizations in the utility and waste management sector, the role in the policy making process of the Aruban 2020 vision and what is the impact of this on the support for the policy?”*

In order to assist answering the central question, the subsequent three sub-questions have been formulated. These questions will be answered theoretically.

- I. *“Which role could an organization take in the policy making process?”*
- II. *“When could you speak of support for the process and the content of policy?”*
- III. *“What is the relationship between a particular role in the policy making process and the degree of support given?”*

The following three questions will be answered empirically.

- I. *“Which role do the organizations from the utility and waste management sector have in the policy making process?”*
- II. *“Are this organizations engaged with the process and/or the content of the 2020 vision?”*
- III. *“To what extent has the role in the policy making process affected the support for the process and content of the 2020 vision?”*

In the first sub question, it will be examined what role various organizations from the utility and waste management sector have in the policy making process of the 2020 vision. This leads to a framework with the different organizations and their role in the process. The second sub question will examine the degree of support for the process and the content of the vision. The third sub-question tries to define the link between the first and the second question. The effect of the roles from the utility and waste management companies on the policy making process and the content will be investigated.

### 1.3 Social and scientific relevance

The Aruban government attaches considerable importance to the 2020 vision. Currently, the tourism sector is the only economic pillar of the island. With ‘the export of green knowledge’ Aruba aims to create a second economic pillar (Spier, 2015). Eventually Aruba aims to be entirely self-sufficient and serve as an example for other vulnerable islands. The shift to a fully self-sufficient island is still going



on. This makes it valuable to identify the roles and the support of various organizations. After all, these organizations are necessary in achieving the 2020 vision. This research about the relation between a role an organization has in a process of policy making and the support an organization gives, can also be applied to other policy areas of the Aruban government.

Furthermore, this research builds on the existing knowledge about roles in a process of policy making and the way this affects the support of stakeholders. In the scientific field, there has been little research on participation and support in Aruban policy. This research, focused on the roles and support of the organizations, are therefore scientifically interesting.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the three sub questions are answered theoretically. The chapter starts with what is theoretically known about different roles an organization can have in a policy making process. In the second part, two forms of support will be discussed. Finally, the relationship between a role in a policy process and the degree in which an organization supports the 2020 vision will be answered.

### 2.1 Role of actor

To provide insight into the roles of organizations in the policy making process, this paragraph starts with the ladder of participation. Subsequently section 2.1.2 is devoted to the components of a policy process.

#### 2.1.1 Degree of influence

In this study the ladder of participation of Edelenbos & Monnikhof (1998) is used in order to examine the influence an organization has on various phases of the policy making process. At the bottom of the ladder organizations have little opportunities to participate. The influence increases through each step upwards.

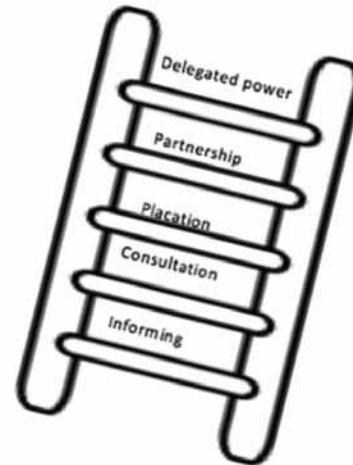


Figure 1: participation ladder

Edelenbos & Monnikhof (1998) distinguish five levels of participation: (1) informing, (2) consultation, (3) placation, (4) partnership and (5) delegated power.

**Informing** often takes place in a one-way flow of information, from officials to an organization or to citizens (Arnstein, 1969). A frequently used method for **consulting** is a survey. The participation is not very high when powerholders restrict the input to this level. At the rung of **placation**, citizens or organizations begin to have some degree of influence at the outcome of a process. Examples of placation are advisory groups and committees. At the level of **partnerships**, the power is redistributed through negotiation between those who are in power and the citizens or other organizations. The planning and responsibilities of decision-making are shared. At the stage of **delegated power** citizens or organizations can achieve decision-making authority over a program or a particular plan.

#### 2.1.2 Influence stakeholders on policy

Policy does not just pull out of the air. There is a sort of system

that translates ideas into policies, also known as the policy making process. A policy making process is believed to be a complex process and involves several phases. Hoogerwerf & Herweijer (2003) distinguish the following six sub-processes: (1) agenda setting, (2) policy preparation, (3) policy formulation, (4) policy implementation, (5) policy enforcement and (6) policy evaluation. In this study policy enforcement and policy evaluation are less important, because the execution of the 2020 vision is still going on.

### **Agenda setting**

The starting point for the development of policy is the agenda setting (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 70). Politicians, directors and/or officers must determine to which social issues they devote their attention. An issue can reach the agenda through centres of expertise (which draws attention to several trends), through politicians or through interest groups (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 77).

The most far-reaching and ambitious attempt to agenda setting is, according to Bovens et al. (2012, p. 78), the attempt of environmentalists and scientist to prove the existence of a global climate change. For decades, there have been attempts to set the issue of climate change on the agenda, but eventually the film *The Inconvenient Truth* (2006) by Al Gore (former vice president of the United States), ensured that the climate change has become an important theme on a lot of countries' agendas. (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 79).

### **Policy preparation**

On the basis of the collection and analysis of information, advice about the policy will be drawn up in this stage (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 89). The policy preparation is seen as an analytical process (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 81).

### **Policy formulation**

At this stage decisions about the content of the policy will be made. Furthermore, the goals, means and execution will be determined (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 109).

Gaining support for the implementation is also part of this stage (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 129).

### **Policy implementation**

At the stage of policy implementation, the decisions of the policymakers are converted into actions (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 133). The government can use tools to achieve a change in the behaviour of organizations or citizens (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 86). The government can also consider other organizations as a tool to achieve their goals (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 87).

In practice, the policy making process often does not occur step by step, but the staged model remains a helpful way to structure the policy process (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 75).

## **2.2 Support**

The concept of support can be used to investigate the degree of organizational support towards a particular policy. First, the degrees of support will be addressed and subsequently attention is paid to the difference between process support and content support.

### **2.2.1 Degree of support by stakeholders**

Boedeltje and de Graaf (2004, p. 3) argue that there is support for a policy when stakeholders review the policy as neutral or as positive. A neutral review can be seen as a minimum of support. Goldenbeld en Vis (2001, quoted in Boedeltje & de Graaf, 2004, p. 4) define a neutral judgment as the absence of criticism and resistance. If the review of a policy is negative, there is no support.

### **2.2.2 Object of support**

Support can exist for the process and for the content of a policy. Boedeltje & de Graaf (2004) call it the object of support.

**Process support** concerns of three important elements. Openness of content includes the room for ideas, actions and

plans of participants in formulation the policy. *Openness of process* stands for access for stakeholders to the process, the boundary conditions of the policy, the transparency of the process and the information provided to the participant. Influence stands for the degree of *influence* on the final policy.

**Content support** concerns the content of the policy as expressed in policy documents and results from a policy making process.

Eventually, the support depends on both the process and the content (Boedeltje & de Graaf, 2004).

### 2.3 Relation role and support

#### Expectation role and process support

The more open the government is and the more influence participants had on the final policy, the greater the acceptance of the process (Boedeltje en de Graaf, 2004, p. 5).

#### Expectation role and content support

Even for the support of the content a positive relation between influence and support is noted. By involving organizations in shaping a policy, the recognition of the policy increases (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 334). The recognition increases the legitimacy and enlarges the chance that the policy will be accepted. In the distinction of Boedeltje en de Graaf (2004, p. 5) this is called the content support.

## 3. Methods

This chapter describes which methodological choices are made in order to achieve the results.

### 3.1 Research design

To answer the research question, current research has applied a cross-sectional design (Bryman, 2008, p. 44). This design enables to examine the relation between two

factors. In this research the relation between the role in a policy making process and the support (for both process and content of the 2020 vision) has been studied through qualitative research. For this study it was not necessary to ask the organizations the same question in several times. Each interview had been held at one certain moment in de months February or March 2016.

### 3.2 Selection of respondents

To obtain a better impression of the context, interviews were conducted with the Ministry of General Affairs, Science, Innovation and Sustainable Development, with Bureau Innovatie and with TNO. The Ministry of General Affairs founded Bureau Innovatie in 2014. TNO is a non-profit organization that helps companies and the government with sustainable solutions.

	Organization	Number of respondents
<b>Context</b>	Ministry of General Affairs Science, Innovation and Sustainable Development	1
	Bureau Innovatie	1
	TNO	2
<b>Utilities</b>	Utilities Aruba	3
	NV Elmar	1
	WEB	1
<b>Waste management</b>	Serlimar	2
	Ecogas	1

Table 1: Respondents

### **Utility companies**

Besides the interviews that contributed to the context, interviews with the utility sector and waste management sector have been conducted as well. First of all, three utility companies were interviewed, namely Utilities Aruba, WEB Aruba and NV Elmar. Utilities NV is the holding company for power and water production and distribution. WEB is resorted under Utilities and produces power and drinking water. WEB transports and distributes the water to its customers. Elmar is the sole power distributor on island; the power is bought from WEB.

### **Waste management companies**

Among the waste companies there has been conducted an interview with Serlimar. Serlimar collects waste and brings it to a dump, this dump is also known as 'Het Parkietenbos'. Within the private sector an interview is conducted by Ecogas. Ecogas is Aruba's first waste-to-energy company. Ecogas collects about 30% of Aruba's waste and currently recycles 20% of this collected waste. Ecogas tries to turn the remaining 80% into gas.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The data is collected on the basis of interviews. Interviewing is a form of qualitative data collection (Bryman, 2012, p. 469). Qualitative data enables the researcher to find meanings, experiences and interpretations of the respondents. This study used a semi-structured interview. During the interviews, a topic list is used to cover all the relevant topics (Bryman, 2012). This topic list followed directly from the theoretical framework. The topic list gave the opportunity for follow-up questions and also an opportunity to ask detailed information concerning certain topics (Bryman, 2012, p. 496).

### **3.4 Data-analyse**

The interviews are recorded with the recording function on a phone. The interview sessions lasted between 30 and 75 minutes. These recordings were made into anonymous

transcripts. The transcripts were analyzed (Bryman, 2012, p. 578). These analyses are made by encoding the transcripts. The coding program NVivo is used to structure the information from the interviews. The codes are originated from the literature and the topic list, therefore a closed coding method is used.

### **3.5 Reliability and validity**

Scientific research is valuable when it is reliable and valid.

#### **Reliability**

Reliability considers the repeatability of the research (Bryman, 2008, p. 31). In qualitative research it is more difficult to guarantee, because a social setting cannot be 'frozen' (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). The policy making process of the 2020 vision is still going on. The social context keeps changing and conducting an interview for the second time would not follow the exact same structure. Using a reliable research method can increase the repeatability. This study used semi-structured interviews, as these are easier to replicate than open interviews. Transcribing and encoding improved reliability as well, because these methods made clear how the study made certain findings.

#### **Validity**

Validity is about the integrity of claims that arise from the research (Bryman, 2008, p. 32). There are two types of validity, respectively the internal and external validity.

The internal validity is related to the question of causality (Bryman, 2008, p. 32). It concerns the question how confident you can be that the independent variable is at least partially responsible for the variation in the dependent variable. This research used a cross-sectional design, which limits the existence of internal validity. A relationship between a role and support can be demonstrated, but the extent in which this connection is causal is limited (Bryman, 2008, p. 46). The interviewed actors are in a social context, so you cannot exclude other factors that may affect the dependent variable.

The external validity is about whether the results from this study can be generalized (Bryman, 2008, p. 33). In this study representatives of ministries, consultants, energy companies and waste companies are interviewed. In the final version of this paper, the role of the tourism sector will be incorporated as well. The primary aim of this research is not to generalize the examined relationship between role and support to other sectors. However, the variation in branches could ensure that the results can be applied to sectors that are not part of this study.

## 4. Results

### 4.1.1 Agenda setting

*the starting point for the development of a policy*

All representatives of the companies in the utility and waste management sector have argued that they did not bring ‘sustainability’ to the attention of the government. Instead Utilities (2016) said: “*The vision comes from the government.*” (Translated from Dutch) The Ministry of General Affairs supports the view that the 2020 vision has been formulated by the head of state. According to this ministry, the prime minister always had a connection with environmental stewardship. The interviewee explained environmental stewardship as a responsible use of the natural environment for future generations. Besides the idea of environmental stewardship, at that time the Aruba’s economy was very dependent on heavy fuel. According to the Ministry of General Affairs (2016), those two factors “sparked things.” (Translated from Dutch) This all happened during the time that climate change was a vexed question. In 2009 the Arubaanse Volkspartij (AVP) came into power and placed the 2020 vision on the agenda. Utilities (2016) said that the green vision “*was first a political ambition, which transformed into the government ambition.*” (Translated from Dutch) In the opposition, the AVP already presented itself as a green party.

### Analysis

The prime minister had set ‘sustainability’ on the agenda. While the stories about worldwide climate change have played a part in the realization of the agenda (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 78), the utility and waste management sector did not play a part in this stage.

### 4.1.2 Policy preparation

*the stage in which an advice about the policy will be drawn up*

Before 2009, the year the 2020 vision was set on the agenda, the prime minister had worked on the policy preparation. Bureau Innovatie (2016) said that there have been conversations with different stakeholders: “Mike Eman has been engaged in politics since 2001 (...) the vision does not appear out of the blue air.” (Translated from Dutch) The Ministry of General Affairs also stated that organizations such as Carbon Warroom and Rocky Mountains were found to assist in realizing the vision.

Utilities and WEB have argued that the AVP did not ask the utility sector for advice about the government’s vision. According to Utilities and WEB, this is understandable because it is unusual to start negotiations with the opposition. Nevertheless the respondent from Utilities believes that there have been conversations before 2009 with experts in the sector.

Ecogas and Serlimar have both stated that they were not informed about the 2020 vision before 2009. Ecogas explained this by stating that they consciously focus on their own policy.

### Analysis

It is remarkable that the different stages of the policy making process are not sharply contrasted. Before 2009, the year that the 2020 vision appeared on the agenda, the prime minister was working on the policy preparation. Advice about the policy was drawn up (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer,

2003, p. 89) before the stage of agenda setting. The utility and waste management companies did not take part in the policy preparation before 2009.

#### **4.1.3 Policy formulation**

*the stage in which decisions about the content of the policy will be made*

By the determination of the 2020 vision, the prime minister set a dream for the future. However, the means to this vision are not completely outlined. The Ministry of General Affairs (2016) expresses this as follows: “You need to have a plan (...) *subsequently recognize, acknowledge and use all the opportunities.*” (Translated from Dutch)

According to the ministry, the early involvement of the utility and waste management companies has been one of the success factors. In 2010, the social dialogue between the government and different social partners, including Utilities, WEB en Elmar, started. This dialogue resulted in a number of agreements. According to the ministry (2016), the final article from the collection of social agreements reads as follows: “*The stakeholders see the necessity of working up a strong social sustainable Aruba.*” (Translated from Dutch) Elmar replied that stakeholders could give their input during the social dialogues. Except for the social dialogue, Utilities said that they compose three documents (Nos Aruba 2025, Roadmap Sustainable Aruba en Aruba Smart Island Strategy). These documents had been formulated in collaboration with e.g. the government, energy companies and TNO. These documents have resulted in the Aruba National Energy Policy. This document contained several goals and identified responsible units.

Serlimar did not receive invitations to meetings. Even though the policy of Ecogas is in line with the 2020 vision, they did not receive an invitation either. This seems to be understandable from the fact that Ecogas is a private company that is still working to improve its own process of

recycling waste and producing gas.

#### **Analysis**

At this moment, the 2020 vision is partly in the stage of policy formulation. Although the aim is set and the first goals are implemented, the means and execution will have to be gradually determined (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 109). Through the help of social dialogues and meetings the government tries to come to an agreement with partners (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 129). For the very reason that Utilities, WEB en Elmar have a great expertise in this field, these companies are in a partnership with the government. The power of the government is redistributed through negotiation between the utility companies and the government (Edelenbos & Monnikhof, 1998). Serlimar and Ecogas both did not take part in this stage.

#### **4.1.4 Policy implementation**

*the stage in which decisions of policymakers are converted into actions*

The Ministry of General Affairs indicates that the utility companies have translated the 2020 vision into their own policy. The website of Utilities Aruba (2016) states: “*This, 2020 sustainable energy target, to have a 100% sustainable power production by 2020, became Utilities, leading role, supervising this energy transition towards her working entities.*”

To realize the 2020 vision, a diverse scale of tools is in use. According to the Ministry of General Affairs, the utility companies are even the pullers of certain projects. Bureau Innovatie shared this opinion. According to them, this has been seen in the case of *Green Aruba*, in which Utilities takes over the lead from Bureau Innovatie. At the recommendation of TNO, the utility companies use the RAS (reliability, affordability, sustainability) framework to move in the direction of the 2020 vision.



Utilities and WEB share the view that the government and the utility companies cooperate closely to be as efficient as possible. The waste management companies Serlimar en Ecogas follow their own policy and are not part of the meetings.

The Ministry of General Affairs (2016) states that executing the vision leads to new challenges: *“We become less dependent on heavy fuel oil and we down on power consumption. How could you ensure the continuation of those companies?”* (Translated from Dutch)

### **Analysis**

At this stage, it is remarkable that, in the actual practice, the phases are not sharply contrasted (Bovens et al., 2012, p. 75). The government is engaged in different levels. The government regards Utilities, WEB and Elmar as the cornerstones of the realisation of the 2020 vision. Additionally, the utility companies and the government work together as partners in this stage. This is not a question of delegated power, because the government is still the holding company. Ecogas en Serlimar did not have a role in this stage.

## **4.2 Support**

### **4.2.1 Process support**

First of all, the 2020 vision seems to have been introduced without sufficient support from the utility companies. Utilities, WEB and Elmar said that this leads a challenge to the companies, but they did not see anything wrong with that. After the first two stage the utility companies had social dialogues in which *“the authorities concerned can provide input.”* (Translated from Dutch) (Elmar, 2016). Utilities, WEB and Elmar are also involved in composing documents such as the Aruba National Energy Policy.

Utilities and WEB share the view that the process is transparent. According to WEB the government and the utility companies keep each other informed about what they are doing. This goes through official channels: *“Through the*

*Supervisory Board to Utilities Aruba. Which again have a Supervisory Board and then it goes to the minister of energy. So there is a continuous dialogue, there are just regular meetings. As soon the government itself has their meetings about visions or project, that sort of things, we are also called. But in the end, you would like to meet each other as much as possible. But if there is no charge for something, then we also have our responsibility to say ‘this is not going to work.’* (WEB, 2016) (Translated from Dutch) Elmar (2016) said that the 2020 vision does not limit the companies: *“We are not, how do you say, limited by the government.”* (Translated from Dutch) One of the main causes for this, as explained by WEB and Elmar, is that their organizations are PLC’s, public limited companies.

Ecogas illustrates that they primarily focus on their own organization, because decision-making generally takes a long time in governmental institutions. Serlimar argued that there is less openness by the government and he has the idea that the government is not enough interested in his company.

### **Analysis**

Since the utility companies are invited to the social dialogues, there is room to share their ideas, actions and plans (Pröpper and Steenbeek, 1998 quoted in Boedeltje & de Graaf, 2004). Also, through the official channels the government and the utility companies keep each other abreast. This increases the transparency. The degree of influence on the final policy is likely to be high, because the utility companies are experts and they have an important role in the execution of the vision. It can be concluded that there is support for the process, because there is a neutral or positive review for the process. Ecogas and Serlimar are more critical.

### **4.2.2 Content support**

As explained Utilities, the 2020 vision took some time to be accepted within the organization. According to WEB (2016), these difficulties had not so much to do with the



vision as such, but more with a 'change' in itself: *"It could be whatever, but people are simply afraid of changes."* (Translated from Dutch)

The two respondents of Utilities understand that the Aruban government would like to make Aruba more sustainable: *"Becoming more green, is something yes, maybe you do not think much of it, it is going to happen. The quicker you switch over, the better it goes for you."* (Utilities, 2016) (Translated from Dutch) According to them, opinions differ about how to reach the sustainability, not about the vision in itself. Utilities has stated that the technology and prices are not ready for being sustainable 24 hours a day, it seems more realistic to be sustainable for a couple of hours. This is the same reason why WEB has set the target to be sustainable for 50% instead of 100%. WEB argued that although there are differences in acceptance to the vision within WEB, more and more people realize that there is no getting away from sustainability. As explained by Elmar, Elmar basically supports the 2020 vision, but in first place they are customer-oriented. Utilities (2016) added that they would not have been as far without the vision: *"To be very honest, if*

*that vision would not have been there. We would not achieve the 20% as we reached now."* (Translated from Dutch) Serlimar basically supports the idea behind the 2020 vision, but he has strong doubts about the feasibility. Ecogas said that the vision suits them fine.

### Analysis

The utility companies Utilities, WEB and Elmar support the content of the 2020 vision. These companies share the opinion that it is important to take the environment into account and they insert sustainability, to a certain extent, into their own policy. Ecogas also supports the content and did not criticize the content of the vision. Serlimar made some critical comments on the feasibility of the 2020 vision.

### 4.3 Relation role and support

The relationship between the role of an organization in policy making process and its support for the process or content can be considered positive when both are either increasing or decreasing. On the other hand, the relation is negative when the role shows a downward tendency and the content an upward tendency, or vice versa.

	<b>Agenda setting</b>	<b>Policy preparation</b>	<b>Policy formulation</b>	<b>Policy implementation</b>	<b>Support process</b>
<b>Utilities</b>	No role	No role	Partnership	Partnership	Yes
<b>WEB</b>	No role	No role	Partnership	Partnership	Yes
<b>Elmar</b>	No role	No role	Partnership	Partnership	Yes
<b>Ecogas</b>	No role	No role	No role	No role	No
<b>Serlimar</b>	No role	No role	No role	No role	No

*Table 2: Roles in the sub-processes of the policy making process and the process support*

#### 4.3.1 Relation role and process support

Based upon the insights gained from the interview respondents, the 2020 vision seems to have been introduced without sufficient support from the utility companies. At the beginning, and because of the uncertainties surrounding the change of plans, a limited degree of support could be detected. During the policy formulation and the policy implementation process, Utilities, WEB and Elmar had room to share ideas and they could influence the policy to a larger extent. Since that moment, it seems that there is no aversion towards the process. Consequently, there appears to be a positive relation between role and process support. The extent of influence and the extent of support are both increasing. Process support is at least partially dependent on the extent to which the partners can influence the policy. The waste companies Serlimar and Ecogas also acknowledge a positive relation. Serlimar had a limited degree of support for the process, because they believe that there is a confined space for Serlimar to be involved. Ecogas is not involved in the process of policy making of its own choice. According to them, through democratic principles and formal procedures, the decision-making process in the public sector takes somewhat longer than in the private sector.

#### Analysis

Involvement in policy making processes seems to affect the process support in a positive way. This positive relation exists in each company. In comparison to the utility companies, the waste companies are more likely to demonstrate a causal relation between role and process support.

#### 4.3.2 Relation role and content support

Since 2009, Utilities, WEB and Elmar are collectively working on the formulation and implementation of the policy, and are thus giving concrete expression to the realization of the vision. In other words, the partners can be found in the fourth stage of the participation ladder, as introduced earlier. In section 4.2.2 was found that Utilities, WEB and Elmar support the content of the 2020 vision. There seems to be a positive relation between role and content support. However, the interviewees indicated that they support the content of the vision for environmental reasons. Not necessarily because they were involved in shaping the policy. In the case of Serlimar, there seems to be a positive relation between role and content support too. The organization was not involved in the policy making process and has communicated a limited degree of

	<b>Agenda setting</b>	<b>Policy preparation</b>	<b>Policy formulation</b>	<b>Policy implementation</b>	<b>Support content</b>
<b>Utilities</b>	No role	No role	Partnership	Partnership	Yes
<b>WEB</b>	No role	No role	Partnership	Partnership	Yes
<b>Elmar</b>	No role	No role	Partnership	Partnership	Yes
<b>Ecogas</b>	No role	No role	No role	No role	Yes
<b>Serlimar</b>	No role	No role	No role	No role	No

*Table 3: Roles in the sub-processes of the policy making process and the content support*

content support towards the realization of the 2020 vision. No positive relation has been found between the role and content support in the case of Ecogas. Ecogas has not been involved in any of the policy making stages, however Ecogas has shown support towards the content of the vision. During the interview, the respondent referred to a number of environmental reasons to reinforce this idea.

### **Analysis**

Bryman (2008, p. 46) explains that a positive relation between role and content support does not necessarily imply a causal connection. Here, involvement of the utility companies in the policy making process does not entirely impact the degree of content support. In Serlimar's case there could be a causal connection, because the support is low through a lack of influence (Hoogerwerf & Herweijer, 2003, p. 334). A positive relation cannot be determined for Ecogas, as the organization did not play a formal role in the process of policy making, but has nonetheless shown sincere interest in the content of the policy.

## **5. Conclusion and discussion**

The present study has investigated the relationship between roles of utility and waste companies in creating policies for the 2020 vision and the support for its process and content.

According to the existing literature a positive relation between role and process support was expected. The same positive relation goes for the role and support for the content. The results show that the positive relation between role and process support exists for all companies. In comparison to the relation between role and content support, this relation seems to be more causal. The interviewees did not highlight other explanations for their process support. In the case of role and content support, there is a positive relation for almost every organization. Ecogas is the only exception to the rule. The positive relation between these two factors is determined in most cases, but the extent in which the

connection is causal is limited. In the results was found that the awareness of climate change in itself, that holds even stronger for Aruba as a small island, turns out to be an important factor for the variation in the content support.

It is important to bear in mind that this study is only based on the utility and waste management sector. To better understand the link between participation and support in the case of the 2020 vision, there should also be pay attention to other sectors or organizations. The tourism industry is the economic pillar of Aruba. Without support of such an important sector, the government cannot achieve its goal. This thesis is a first version; in the final version, the role of the tourism sector will be incorporated as well. Finally, the aim is to make recommendations for further execution of the 2020-vision. This will be based on the results from respectively the utility sector, waste management sector and the tourism sector. As a result of executing the 2020 vision, new questions about the continuation of gas, water and electricity comes up. More research is needed to determine which business models could maintain the continuation of those organizations.

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### **It, indeed, was One Happy Island**

And off we went. After the customs checks and a little bit of shopping it was time to board the plane. I saw a commercial sign that said “*World, here I come*” and that was exactly how I felt that very moment when I stepped onto the plane. Just three months earlier, I had never imagined myself going abroad so soon, let alone going to Aruba to take part in this program.

This program allows students from different academic and national backgrounds to discover various ways of conducting research. It was a real pleasure to learn about the variety of subjects that fellow students examined for their thesis. For me, as a researcher, I learned to be independent and rely on my own insights. I also learned to recover when things did not go as planned.

For me as a person, my time on Aruba was one with many ‘first times’. The first time that I did a research like this on my own. The first time I saw the sun come up after a whole night of studying. The first time I was able to go the beach at 4 pm and forget the time I spent at the university that day. The first time I celebrated Caribbean Carnival. The first time I flew halfway around the world with new roommates I didn’t really know before. The first time I enjoyed a pool-brunch with most of my Aruban peers who turned out to be really good at baking as well as researching. The first time I lived in a, so called, pink ‘Barbiehouse’ and shared every hour, thought, hug and tear with 5 amazing girls. And also the first time I fell in love with a country other than the small and familiar country that I grew up in.

While doing these ‘firsts’, I got experience for life that I will cherish every time like it is the first time!

# Aruba's sustainable transition: Leadership used in an organizational transition towards sustainability from a management perspective.

Lizanne Takke

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Aruban context

Sustainability on a small island like Aruba is key to preserve the living and environmental standards.

The 2020 vision, initiated in 2009 by Prime Minister Eman was a turning point for Aruba. In this publication he presented the dream that Aruba would be able to sustain itself without the usage of fossil fuels. Even before Prime Minister Eman's initiative there were some organizations that embraced sustainability in their core-businesses. This research will examine three organizations that adopted sustainability within their organizations and how they, from a leadership point of view, achieve an alignment throughout their companies.

The Government's mission of being sustainable is driven by the idea that economic growth can go hand in hand with creating a better life for the inhabitants, thus improving the quality of life for Aruba's citizens and at the same time protecting the island's fragile ecology. By focusing on sustainability, the Aruban Government hopes to cope with the overall vulnerability. Aruba is a vulnerable island due to various reasons. First of all, the population has almost doubled since 1960 (Belle, 2001, p. 13) which means that the available living space decreases fast. Secondly, the tourism industry accounts for 88.4% of the Gross Domestic

Product (GDP) of Aruba (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015, p. 1) and to keep the tourists coming to the white beaches, nature preservation needs to be improved. Thirdly, the nation is highly dependent on import (Spier, 2015). This means it has to use its resources as efficiently as possible. With the focus on sustainability the goal is to create "*a socially, environmentally and economically resilient island that takes advantage of efficient use of its abundant natural and clean resources*" (Government of Aruba, 2015, p. 4).

### 1.2 Organizational change towards sustainability/ research

As mentioned above, not only the government is trying to be more sustainable. Different organizations recognize the necessity of being more sustainable as well as the opportunities that come with it.

Before one can begin the transition towards sustainability a lot of aspects need to be discovered. One of the first questions that arise concerns the interpretation of the concept sustainability. The next question that needs to be answered is how to start the transitions. For example, how can the manager create support for the changes, which obstacles are identified and how can they be overcome? Therefore, the overall focus of this research will be on how leadership is used within three Aruban organizations to lead the organizations through a transition towards sustainability.

The results of this research can help other organizations that want to make the change towards sustainability by explaining different manners to implement this transition.

### 1.3 Organizations

The organizations were approached after consulting different sources and chosen based on their willingness to participate in the research. The three organizations are the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort, Water- en Energiebedrijf Aruba N.V. and the Dienst Openbare Werken.

The Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort is a pioneer when it comes to sustainability. Since the resort received their first certificate, the Green Globe Certification in 2000, the resort earned several certifications covering different components of sustainability. Nowadays, they are still searching for new certifications that will prove their sustainable mentality. Additionally, auditors for the certification visit regularly and keep them focused. Besides the certifications the resorts experiments with various sustainable solutions in order to constantly improve themselves.

Dienst Openbare Werken (DOW) strives to be more sustainable in their operational work. Simultaneously with these changes, a new vision is being implemented. The vision was created to get the entire organization aligned. This proves to be a challenge as this is the first time that any type of overall vision is developed.

Lastly, Water- en Energiebedrijf Aruba N.V. (WEB) is a subsidiary company of Utilities Aruba, in which the Aruban Government is a major shareholder. As the only water and energy supplier on the island, the organization has a significant role in accomplishing the Government's 2020 vision. In the years preceding 2013, their corporate strategy have shifted towards efficiency, with sustainability as an additional benefit. Since 2013, WEB is integrating sustainability in their corporate strategy and improving their business in a green way by initiating more sustainable

projects. The goal is to get the whole organization on-board and not only the departments that are trained in preparation for substantively changed work.

## 2. Theoretical framework.

Before the data collection, an extensive review of the literature has been conducted to shed light on a number of sensitizing concepts that will be evident throughout the present study. A sensitizing concept "gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances." (Blumer, 1954, p.7 in Bryman 2008, p. 388). This implies that the following concepts, as derived from the literature, are specified during the course of the research.

### 2.1 Meaning of the term sustainability

Nowadays, organizations can no longer deny the importance of sustainability. But the interpretation depends on the values and thoughts of an individual. Fineman, Gabriel and Sims (2010) have made a distinction between several interpretations of the word sustainability.

First, *'shallow green'* refers to the neutralization of negative consequences a company's production can have on the environment. Besides, the term *'deep green'* indicates the emphasis on nurturing relations between organizations and their surroundings. This is also labeled the *'Gaia Principle'*; taking care of each other and the environment (Fineman et al., 2010, pp. 202 - 203). Lastly, there is a form of *'green washing'* when an organization's motivation is more about appearing sustainable rather than actually being sustainable in practice.

### 2.2 Setting goals and achieving them

In order for a society to accomplish goals considering environmental protection and sustainability, businesses need to take responsibility, which can be done by means of self-regulation (Shoop, 2011). Self-regulation involves setting goals in terms of sustainability standards. Setting



goals can be easy, however, actually reaching these can be an undeniable challenge (Davis & Scott, 2007, p. 202). In the Aruban context, meeting these goals and standards is mostly done by top-down implementation (Interview TNO 2016; Interview Bureau Innovatie, 2016). To get the entire organization on the same page in such a transition, leadership is of great importance.

Similar to sustainability, leadership is a term that can be interpreted in multiple ways. A precise definition of leadership is not available in literature (Fineman et al., 2010; Lakomski, 2005, p. 6). Nonetheless, Fineman et al. (2010) give various perspectives from which leadership can be looked at.

First, leadership can be looked at from a power perspective. Having power enables the leader to ensure that something is being done, which otherwise would not take place (Fineman et al., 2010, pp. 100 -101). Second, a leader should be capable of formulating a coherent vision and executing it as such in order to create guidance for all of the departments within an organization (Fineman et al., 2010, pp. 103 - 107). Thirdly, leadership can be viewed as managing the meanings within one's organization:

*“Leaders need to know what is important and meaningful to the people they work with, and somehow shape their beliefs, or ‘meanings’ in a direction which makes organizational sense”* (Fineman et al., 2010, p. 104).

Controlling the dominant meanings is essential in organizations that find themselves in any kind of transition. The interpretation of the reality is key when influencing people to make them go in the right direction (Lakomski, 2005, p. 10). When organizations are in the process of becoming more sustainable, it is essential that everyone sees the usefulness and necessity of sustainability. Here, leadership should generate meanings through which the entire company realizes the positive effects of sustainability. Fourth, leadership can be examined as a set of arts. This perspective can be divided in several aspects. One of them

is the psychological aspect that refers to creating a common identity and a sense of belonging to establish a shared spirit. In this research, this involves the central aim to achieve shared responsibility for the environment and creating a greener mindset. Another aspect of the set of arts is determining the planning and empowering the employees so that they are able to do their job correctly (Fineman et al., 2010, p. 107).

### **2.3 Phases of a transition**

Transition management is being used by supervisors and managers to achieve the goals set for self-regulation. At operational level, transition management has four sub transitions in which practices can be divided. First, the problem has to be identified and the new vision should match the solution for solving this problem. Second, the vision has to earn a spot on the agenda followed by setting out the path and process for implementation. The third sub transition involves experimenting on operational level so workable practices can be invented. In the last and fourth sub transition it is a matter of monitoring and evaluating (Kemp, Loorbach & Rotmans 2007, pp. 82-83).

It is necessary to realize that the sub transitions, as mentioned above, are not sharply distinguished. Trying to manage a transition equals trying to change people and that is not as predictable as it may seem initially. Managing transitions is more like dealing with complex system of values, meanings and communicative challenges (Fullan, 2002). As for a transition towards sustainability, the extra difficulty is the ambiguity of sustainability. As Kemp et al. (2007, p. 79) stated: *“As a multidimensional and dynamic concept sustainable development can neither be translated into the narrow terms of static optimization nor it is conducive to strategies based on direct control, fixed goals and predictability”*.

In short, making sustainable changes within an organization is about the top-down reconsidering the practices of the

organization. It is a process in which the work, meanings, norms and values within the organization need to be redefined. Through using leadership practices new relations can be developed between the economy, environment, people and social cohesion to smoothen the process of the transition towards sustainability (Kemp et al., 2007).

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1 Research strategy

In the modern management literature, the idea emerges that qualitative research is more suitable for examining leadership (Lakomski, 2005, p. 7). Qualitative methods offer an effective way of understanding the context and the meanings within the organizations. Therefore, this research has used qualitative analysis to get insight in how leadership can be used to guide the organization through a sustainability transition. The three Aruban organizations were studied using a case study method (Bryman 2008, pp. 52-54). A case study approach was chosen to gain detailed understanding of the leadership practices used within the organizations.

The three organizations differ on several aspects, but they are equivalent when it comes down to incorporating sustainability in their vision and daily work. The choice has been made to conduct the research within three organizations for the reason that this gives the possibility to make a more valuable comparison than with only two organizations.

#### 3.2 Instruments

Data has been collected using semi-structured interviews. A topic list was deduced from the studied literature and served as a guideline during the interview. Using semi-structured interviews allow for the possibility to ask for follow-up questions, which is valuable because it enables a complete understanding of the respondent's perspective. These interviews were conducted with the higher

management or the middle management. This depended on the fact whether the higher managers or the line managers were carrying out the transition. The interviews examined, among other things, the formulation of the organization's vision as well as the implementation process and the obstacles that were identified during the process.

Subsequently, the interviews were analyzed in order to describe different components of the transition. The analysis has been done with the use of Nvivo. The above mentioned sensitizing concepts were used as the initial codes in the course of the analysis. Furthermore, themes or problems that came forward during the interviews were added as codes. This form of axial coding (Boeije, 2006, p. 98), was done until complete data saturation was reached. Further, a distinction was made between main codes and smaller specified codes, to structure the analysis of the data.

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1 Definition and motives

As mentioned before, different interpretations of the term sustainability can be adopted in each organization. The Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort recognized that there indeed are a million different ways to specify sustainability. The company recognizes that reducing energy and saving in utilities is one way to embody it, but there is a lot more that could be done. The resort tries to cover all different aspects of sustainability by getting different certificates. This is exemplified by the work that has been undertaken to have a paperless check-in and green cleaning standards. In this way all of the employees and managers will be kept focused and targeted by the audits for the certifications. The organization's culture is all about being sustainable. To maintain and improve this, there is a sustainability manager that is constantly seeking new ways to improve the resort. This improvement is not only technological but also practical. The resort tries to be sustainable in a way that preserves more than just the environment, but also Aruba's culture and heritage.

At DOW sustainability is included in the newly presented vision of the organization. In this case it is about working efficient and proactive while taking “environmental and economic sustainability into account.” as the respondent answered. This can be illustrated by the fact that in their work with the sewage treatment plant, DOW considers new alternatives. For example, the leftover silt is now being burned at Parkietenbos, but at the end of the year DOW wants a business case on how to incorporate sustainability for these, otherwise, waste products. By doing this DOW hopes to find a way to reduce costs, while discovering new ways to handle waste water. In conclusion, sustainability cannot be described as a term, but rather as a direction the organization wants to go with the operational work as well as the internal organization.

At WEB, sustainability started out as an additional benefit of trying to be more efficient. In their case this includes reducing the use of heavy fuel oils and energy, while searching for alternatives to keep the water and energy plant operating. At the same time an awareness campaign was launched, aimed at showing their clients how they could reduce their water usage. The sustainability and efficiency mindset is driven by the fact that Aruba is an island, which means that Aruba cannot rely on neighboring countries to support them in cases of shortfall in energy or water supplies. In short, sustainability at WEB is linked to the aim of being less dependent and operate the plant efficiently.

## **4.2 Transitions**

### **4.2.1 Agenda setting and vision**

In all of the three organizations the agenda setting was done by the board or a manager. In the case of the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort, CEO Mr. Biemans went to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and came back with a sustainability inspired mindset. At that time he was at the board of AHATA, the Aruban Hotel And Tourism Association, where he addressed sustainability. As a result the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort started as sustainable pioneer along

with 4 other hotels.

DOW, which is a governmental institution, went along with the 2020 vision and tried to incorporate that in their own new vision. This process started when the organization had to write a new overall strategy.

As mentioned before, prior to the 2020 vision the corporate strategy of WEB was focused on efficiency, with sustainability as an additional benefit. After 2012, the new corporate strategy included focus on sustainability as an aspect of its own rather than a fortuitous coincidence.

### **4.2.2. Experiment and evaluate**

One of the things that was mentioned repeatedly during the interview with the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort is that many of the options for being sustainable are being tested. A good example is the idea to switch off the lights in the Tara lounge at night, when there are no guest in the lounge. This idea has been incorporated for several nights but could not be sustained since the security cameras could not record the area in the dark. This is one of the examples where new initiatives are being tested and tweaked until the practices are suitable or to determine its success. The resort is always trying to improve even if it comes with higher costs. The heads of the department set goals for the entire organization and those goals drip down into each department where the goals are specified into the department goals. Evaluation is done on regular basis. Guests receive a questionnaire to give feedback after checking out and the staff is not shy to come up with alternatives or give their opinion.

DOW used, so-called, roadshows to communicate the new vision with all of the staff members. In these roadshows staff members were able to give their opinion about the transition. In these roadshows some obstacles were identified and DOW is now thinking about how to handle these. So in the process of transition the project group took a step back to look at all the possibilities to overcome these obstacles. After this they will use the evaluations to continue the transition and get the whole organization aligned.

At WEB the operationalization started a couple of years ago and process is being evaluated. Obstacles are identified and they are looking for ways to overcome them. An idea that was brought to the surface was to gather input from different layers of the organization. Therefore, the project group, considering the implementation of the strategy, is now looking for possibilities to get staff members in the team that revisits the corporate strategy each year. It is a matter of evaluating and renewing the strategy as well as the process.

#### **4.3 Process of implementation**

The Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort was a relatively small resort when the implementation process started. At that time there was no resort manager or a plan to implement sustainability in their organization. Nowadays, there is a sustainability manager and all of the department heads implement every change within their own department. The department's goals are an adequate way to keep track of and measure the progress. Due to all the changes that have been initiated before, the department heads now know how to deal with changing people's minds. Even though the implementation and goal setting is initiated top-down, the staff members are able to give input and feedback on regular basis.

DOW has been assisted by PwC with the implementation of the new vision. Thus, when the implementation started there was a masterplan for the first stages of the implementation. Besides the roadshows, project groups were created for different aspects of the transition. Now the masterplan has been executed, the project group that supervises the implementation has to go back to the drawing board and make a plan for the further execution of the new vision. Also, to empower the changes a set of internal rules were written down. This is the first time that these rules are written down in which the rights and obligations of each employee are outlined. Due to these rules, DOW can be very clear about what is expected from their employees in the new vision.

As mentioned above, in 2012 WEB took their new corporate strategy into use. In the years before that several analysis and scenario sketching has been done, to figure out what the best direction to go is. Based on of the different scenarios a stakeholder-analysis and a SWOT-analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) were done and the definitive corporate strategy was formulated. Internally it is a matter of raising organizational wide awareness. This is being done by the board and the Public-Relations department, as it turned out to be a communicational matter. Now, three years later, the parts of the organization that work with new sustainable projects are fully informed but still other parts of the organization that are not directly linked to sustainability need to be involved in the transition. That is why WEB is currently searching for new practices to ensure that the entire organization supports the implementation.

#### **4.4 Economical aspects**

In this case study, the three organizations do take costs into account but in different ways. The Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort tries to be the most sustainable even if the costs are higher than the less sustainable solutions. At the same time the heads of departments try to make the staff members more cost aware and thereby making staff members think about sustainability and efficiency. DOW tries to reduce the costs by using waste products for new purposes. In the end DOW works for their customers, the municipalities, therefore the DOW tries to keep their costs as low as possible. WEB also wants to keep the costs low for entire Aruban population. That is why the focus is on a combination of affordable, sustainable and reliable practices. If new projects do not account for all three factors, they will not be implemented.

#### **4.5 Obstacles and how to overcome them**

One of the things that came forward in all of the three organizations is that change can be scary for employees. It does not matter to what changes the transition will lead

but when the future is unknown this will cause a lot of uncertainty in the organization. In studied organizations employees were not against sustainability but rather the feeling of pendency for their own work.

#### **4.5.1 Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort**

In the early 00's the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort realized people in the Caribbean were only talking about sustainability and really engaging in it was something new. At the start of the process, it was difficult for the employees to adapt to the new situation because the way they had been working for years, suddenly was not good enough anymore. In the past, there have been numerous changes so the staff members are used to learning new ways. Still, every time it is a matter of communicating why something should be done in this particular way and why it is good; for the resort, for Aruba but also for the employees themselves. That is why, that before anything changes, the plan will be communicated with the staff and this gives them some time to think about it. Just planting the seed, discuss it in every meeting and trying to get everyone to accept it, before the implementation starts. To make sure everyone is willing to participate, the why and how of the change is repeated constantly. This comes from the drive from upper management and ownership to set the right expectation for all the staff members.

There is not always resistance to new changes but when there is, uncertainty is abated by talking about it and showing the staff how it should be done. The latter is really important so the department heads needs to set an example for the staff members. The department heads emphasizes so much on the sustainability practices because they are conscious about the fact that if they let it slip away, even for a second, the whole thing would come down. The management sees it as "it takes 21 times to create a habit", so they are constantly focused on repeating themselves over and over again all until the staff members have adopted the new way.

In the end, a constant stimulant is showing the feedback guests give on, for example, Trip Advisor. By showing the positive reactions to the staff members, the staff members are being reassured that what they are doing is appreciated and that it is being done in the right way. This helps to encourage the staff to come up with ideas as well. When a sustainable practice is reviewed it is not rare that the staff brings in ideas of how things could be done. This means that they are listened to by the department heads, which empowers them to really play a role in the whole transition.

#### **4.5.2 DOW**

At DOW, the main challenge is to get the older generation of employees to support the newly presented vision. During the implementation process, it was discovered that the younger employees could handle the changes better. The employees who have more working experience find it hard to adjust to the new rules, vision and way of working. The older employees had their own comfort zone in which they had been working for years and suddenly it had to change. The older generation felt as though the younger and inexperienced employees were disregarding the much more experienced employees by initiating the change.

With these changes it was essential to realize that all employees are vulnerable when it comes down to changing their work. Another obstacle that became clear was the dissatisfaction with the promotions within DOW. When employees did not get their promotion or did not get evaluated at all, it was taken personal, which creates a kind of resistance to anything that their manager comes up with. Here, the vision was used as an excuse to oppose to the course of events concerning the promotion.

Also noticed when implementing the vision was the mentality of people who work for the government. Here, it was perceived as being nonchalant and not being as proactive or efficient as possible. With this new vision and set of internal rules employees had to switch this

commitment. The introduction of the internal rules has created yet another obstacle. The rules are created to align the whole organization and to make sure that everyone is treated the same way. But for some employees it feels like they are closely monitored all the time as if they are not trustworthy anymore.

DOW is still in the process of determining how to resolve these issues. But they are well underway with explaining the vision and communicate it throughout the whole organization. In each building there are signs with the key words of the vision and the project group 'tangibles' makes sure that everyone comes into contact with the vision every day. The first step involves the explication of the vision so all the employees knows what is expected from them. At the same time all of the department heads and managers and their teams should discuss how they can interpret the vision and how to use it in their daily work. When every employee knows how they can contribute to the new working standards, the second step is to enhance the social interaction between departments. This is being done by sending out the newsletter and keeping departments informed about what other departments are doing. The expectation is that this will increase the overall motivation within DOW.

#### **4.5.3 WEB**

At WEB, they also noticed that change and transition can be problematic. Here, after three years, still not all the employees are informed about the new corporate strategy and the direction in which WEB is planning to go. The Public Relations department stresses the importance of repeating the communication. There have been several sessions in which the employees where informed about the corporate strategy. Even after these 6 events, some people say that they have not heard about the changes. Even though not everyone feels the same, it seems like the sustainability awareness slowly grows. This raises the question if there is some resistance because employees do

not support the vision or just did not come in contact with it yet.

One of the causes of resistance within the organization is the costs that are related with sustainability changes. In the interview, the example was cited that if WEB wants to build a new wind farm, that will create extra costs. Since WEB is the only water and energy supplier on the island, the entire population will notice this increase in costs and this will do harm to WEB's image and all of the people working for WEB.

For some of the departments the changes were very drastic because the machines, changed and therefore the way of working needed to change as well. These departments were trained thoroughly so the employees became enthusiastic about the sustainability transition. With getting all of the employees of other departments engaged with sustainability WEB hopes to create a sense of common vision and motivation.

During the implementation, WEB noticed that its problem particularly lies in the ambiguity concerning what the strategy means for one's own work. When this is not clear for the employee he or she will resists going along with the implementation because it is unclear what it means for his situation and in the end, their salary.

In the early stages WEB invested a lot of time in creating support for the strategy, but because it was too soon in the process there was not much to show what the new corporate strategy and sustainability vision were really about. After some time the board discovered that when you can demonstrate what you are doing, the belief and thereby the support grows. So along the way everyone is being informed about every new progress that has been made. This is being done through photos, short videos and newflashes on the TV-screens across the organization. Besides, the employees can always go their supervisor if they have any questions



considering their work in combination with the corporate strategy.

To get input from the all the layers of the organization, WEB is now looking for possibilities to get employees involved in different project groups. In that way the board wants to find out if there is a lack of support or the communication was not sufficient.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1 Sustainability and economical aspects**

As mentioned in the theoretical framework there are numerous interpretations of the term sustainability. Even though that 'shallow green' or 'deep green' are not fixed classifications, organizational practices can be divided in those groups

First, the practices by Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort can be classified as deep green. Sustainability is in the core of their culture and everything that happens within the organization. The fact that the resort is willing to spend more money for more sustainable solutions is a good illustration of this. DOW's search for sustainable alternatives can be seen as deep green, because it involves a long term solution. Additionally the overall vision can be seen as shallow green because sustainability is of secondary importance that can be seen as a benefit next to the overall strive for efficiency. This efficiency aim is mostly driven by cost awareness. WEB has deep green practices that reduce the use of heavy fuel oil and raising awareness to reduce the water usage. Besides that, the way the management involves the rest of the organization in the sustainable transition can be ranked shallow green because it is not about solving the problem but it does stimulate a sustainable mind set. And even though they focus on sustainability, it needs to be financial affordable.

### **5.1 Transition and process**

In the three organizations the implementation process

started top-down. Another similarity is that each organization recognizes the importance of experimenting and evaluating the leadership practices. This is being done in different ways by the managers. The Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort focusses on setting goals and standards that drip down the organization. Experimentation is being done through trial and error of different sustainable practices and also in communication with the staff the department heads try different ways of showing the staff members the importance of the change. DOW came up with a so called masterplan which identified some obstacles. Now, the masterplan is completed and evaluated, new ways of motivating the workforce are being explored. Last, WEB started with a SWOT-analysis to gather information about different scenarios the new corporate strategy would lead to. After three years the plan is now being evaluated and new motivational leadership practices are being examined.

### **5.2 Leadership practices**

One of the main findings is that communication is the most important aspect in a transition for reaching alignment within the whole organization. Respondents from different organizations explained how change can cause uncertainty about the consequences for the individual employee. Even though an employee could support sustainability, resistance can occur when there is ambiguity about the personal circumstances. In all of the interviews the respondents indicated that this could be taken away by explaining and repeating the how and the why.

The Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort stresses the importance of communicating the necessity of the transition. In communicating with their staff, department heads show the benefits for the individual staff members while explaining the changes and lessen the uncertainty. This is a clear example of how a leader can manage the meanings of the employees through communication while carrying out the organization's vision. DOW is still in the process of figuring out how to manage the dominant meanings in



their organization but the project group underscores the importance of communicating what these changes mean for individuals. At WEB, managing meanings is harder in departments that do not come in contact with sustainability on a daily basis. In these departments, it is still unclear if it is the support or the knowledge that is missing.

*to like specially thank my respondents from the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort, Water- en Energiebedrijf Aruba N.V. and Dienst Openbare Werken for opening up to me about their transitions toward sustainability. This gave me new insights that I can use in the rest of my personal life and career!*

The power perspective of leadership is seen in all the three organizations. At the Bucuti and Tara Beach Resort, staff members need to reach the goals set by the department heads. In the case of DOW, a new set of internal rules empowers the managers and at WEB new sustainable projects are being approved by the board. When talking about leadership as a set of arts, the different managers see the importance of the psychological aspect. Namely, a shared identity enhances the overall organizational motivation.

## **6. Conclusion**

In short, leadership is being used in different ways to realize alignment within in the three Aruban organizations. In order to smoothen the transition, leaders can involve employees to determine any obstacles in the implementation. To take a step back and evaluate the process as well as the content of the vision can be necessary in order to get a complete image and considerate how to move on from there. Besides that, managing the dominant and individual meanings through communication seems to be the most important when implementing changes within an organization. This will take away the uncertainty that can cause resistance when the future is unknown.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

*For the opportunity to take part in this program, I would like to thank Eric Mijts and Jocelyn Ballantyne for their endless dedication to organize this program. Furthermore, I would like to thank Jeroen Vermeulen for the feedback. I would*

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Jochem Pennekamp, University of Aruba

Being a participant member of the UAUCU//UU undergraduate student research program has been such an engaging experience, that it is rather challenging to express appreciation in such a small collection of words. A theme that is central to the study, multi-stakeholder partnerships, has not appeared out of thin air, but was identified earlier during my internship at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs, in The Hague. Throughout the summer period of 2015, I conducted a research on the practical application of the triple helix models with the aim to better understand how collaboration amongst knowledge institutes, government departments and private entities can expedite urban growth and innovation. Accordingly, the findings that resulted from this exploratory research have served as an incentive to carry on discovering the manners in which formally regulated partnerships could be beneficial in the Aruban context.

One of the most valuable experiences gained throughout the duration of the program is the contentment to conduct research in the company of the most interesting and open-minded individuals who continue to give concrete expression to those interests that drive their curiosity. Even though, the students adhere to different academic disciplines, the exchange of individual interpretations and perspectives on language and culture; health and care development; international relations and diplomacy; labor and productivity; and lastly, organizational transitions and sustainability, has led to the creation of something larger than the sum of the parts.

In addition, the program has further underlined the privilege of setting up and carrying out research in a stimulating environment. The researcher's freedom to personalize the methodology that is best fit for the context in which the research is being carried out, and the interaction with the interview respondents has surely contributed to personal and academic development. Also, the profound interest in the research topic, shown by experts in the field, has been overwhelming and further fueled the desire to deliver a research that would respond to the needs of society.

I hope that my endeavors will contribute something meaningful to the island that has been home for the last four years. Pride towards my island's rich culture and history; the sound of ocean waves gently breaking against the shore; and the endless opportunities to seek greater development through the participation of extracurricular activities, have constructed an everlasting bound to *nos baranca tan stima*. The inhabitants' desire to determine their own destiny and thus to make meaningful contributions to the island's nationwide development has given me the hope that cross-institutional partnerships will one day become one of the indispensable hallmarks of Aruba's community. I wish that the study can be a first attempt to showcase Aruba's potential to be a breeding ground for the advancement of triple helix partnerships.

# Does the Model Fit the Format?

## A Re-contextualization of the Triple Helix Model(s) in a Small Island Setting

Jochem Pennekamp

### 1. Introduction

Recent years have globally witnessed interesting shifts in the linguistic landscape, which means that the manner in which particular terms are used in our daily language has shifted as well. Whether these discourses stem from a social, geopolitical, cultural, environmental or economic discipline, a prominent manifestation in this changing landscape is the recurrence of the term 'sustainability'. Even though the term has been widely embraced and articulated in all segments of society, Woolcock & Narayan (2009) denote that societal institutes do not seem to individually possess the resources needed to make the necessary impact in resolving sustainability challenges, let alone formulating smart solutions. As a result, society is confronted with a situation in which there is a need to capitalize on the harmonization of individual actions and the exchange of intellectual capital. Austin (2000, p. 44) describes this setting as the "collaboration paradigm of the twenty-first century", to underscore that multi-stakeholder partnerships would pave the way for the advancement of comprehensive solutions to sustainability challenges.

In addition to the recurrence of the term sustainability, there is growing interest in the addressment of the challenges. The Government of Aruba, among others, has set course to transition the island towards complete independence from energy generated through fossil fuels (Government of

Aruba, 2015, p. 6). This ambitious endeavor can be seen as a response to global warming issues and the subsequent rising sea levels that might endanger low-lying coastal countries such as Aruba. Likewise, the legal agreement signed by the member states of the United Nations (UN) during the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) hint at the growing interest in collaborative commitments. The former lies at the heart of the analytical framework that has been developed by Etzkowitz (1993), who has introduced the triple helix models to highlight shifting roles and responsibilities that arise during cross-sectoral collaboration. A great deal of previous research into the application of these models has focused on continental contexts where relevant institutional actors tend to have formulated intelligent manners to enhance collaboration. Regional clusters in which government departments, private entities and knowledge institutes are centered in a particular area are common phenomena.

Notwithstanding, present study is in line with Cai's (2014) attempt to examine triple helix partnerships in a non-western context. More particular to this study, it aims to describe the current state of Aruba's cross-institutional interaction to better understand how collaboration is evolving in a small island. Subsequently, the study seeks to develop a recipe for the deployment of an accurate collaboration model; the recommendations are intended to act as a suggestive tool for all institutional actors involved. With this, the study reaffirms

the importance of collaboration in addressing sustainability issues. The research triggers the knowledge institutes to shift focus to applied science so that these institutes can find solutions to issues that arise in the private entities; it helps to support and inspire these entities to bolster the movement of intellectual capital by interacting across institutional boundaries; and lastly it fosters understanding and provides insights according to which the government finds more inspiration to establish relevant conditions for triple helix partnerships.

## 2. Research Question

The subsequent question has been formulated to gain a comprehensive understanding of triple helix partnerships and of all characteristics that deserve inclusion in a tailor-made model. The question reads as follows: ‘what characteristics of existing models should be embodied in and disembodied from a triple helix model that properly fits the Aruban context to promote collaborative innovation?’

To provide an answer to this question, it is a must to understand the following four sub-questions. The first question will be answered by means of the literature review and concerns the division of roles and responsibilities amongst the institutional actors: (1) ‘how do knowledge institutes, private entities and government relate to each other in the triple helix models?’ The second will be tested empirically through the perception of the interview respondents, and is formulated as: (2) ‘what are the characteristics that could contribute to a successful triple helix model on Aruba?’ Further, the third question aims to indicate suggestions on a model that would positively contribute to the collaboration efforts and has been translated into the following sub-question: (3) ‘what type of triple helix model would function adequately on Aruba to promote collaborative innovation?’ The

last sub-question intends to propose recommendations that are meant to act as a suggestive tool for all institutional actors involved: (4) ‘what recommendations can be made to improve the success rate of triple helix partnerships on Aruba?’

## 3. Relevance

### Academic

Most of the reviewed literature relates to descriptions of triple helix relationships in large continental contexts where the creation and/or adaptation of the models tend to be well advanced. In these contexts, empirical evidence hints at the presence of formally regulated partnerships amongst knowledge institutes, private entities and government departments. In contrast to the Western industrialized countries’ examples that largely dominate the literature, the present study intends to explore the practical application of the triple helix models in a Small Island Developing State (SIDS)<sup>1</sup>. There is relevance to the fact that the study is conducted in a small island context, as this provides a new dynamic to the growing body of literature about triple-helix partnerships. Further, the qualitative research methodology, inspired by the Delphi method, provides enough space for the respondents to develop individual understandings that could be incorporated in the literature. Lastly, this study can serve as future reference to individuals interested in the application of triple helix models in SIDS and to continue with this important dialogue on Aruba or in fellow island nations.

### Social

An important rationale for conducting this study is to make a meaningful contribution to the Aruban society in its widest sense. While sustainability and collaboration have clearly become prominent terms in our daily language, the study builds upon the need to discuss the effective

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1. These are a distinct group of developing countries and territories recognized as a special case for both their environment and development. Even though these Small Island Developing States vary in terms of their geographical size and climatic circumstances, they are bound together as a consequence of a range of socio-economic, geopolitical, cultural, and environmental vulnerabilities.

management of changing governance structures to be able to cope with sustainability challenges. However, there has been little detailed investigation of triple helix relationships in small island contexts. It is, therefore, relevant to provide insights into the organization and management of ambitious types of collaboration that are needed to transition towards a knowledge-driven economy. The recommendations that will be drawn from the results can be helpful to societal institutions that have recently started with collaboration, as it describes some interpretations on the actual and desired type of collaboration model. These recommendations might likewise have a trickledown effect on others. Lastly, successful deployment of an appropriate collaboration model and an understanding of the necessary conditions for triple helix partnerships can lead to economic diversification within the Aruban community, creating an additional pillar and thus lessen the reliance on tourism, as the single economic sector.

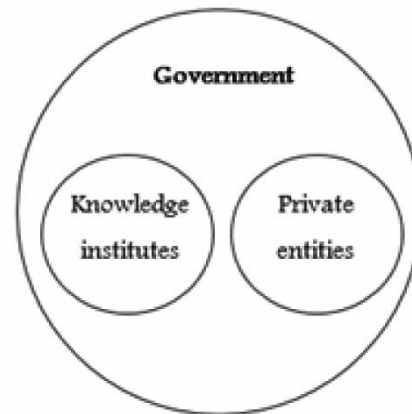
#### 4. Theoretical Perspective

Aforementioned, and as a consequence of the mounting evidence of sustainability issues, a considerable body of literature has grown around the theme of sustainability (Raven, 2002). In the light of this, Bakshi & Fiksel (2003, p. 1350) found that sustainability has become a fundamental driver of organizational performance. The authors believe that we can no longer ignore the significance of challenges such as the “overexploitation of renewable resources; hunger and malnourishment; unsustainable production patterns; the consumption of ozone depleting substances; loss of agricultural land due to deforestation; and proliferation of infectious diseases”.

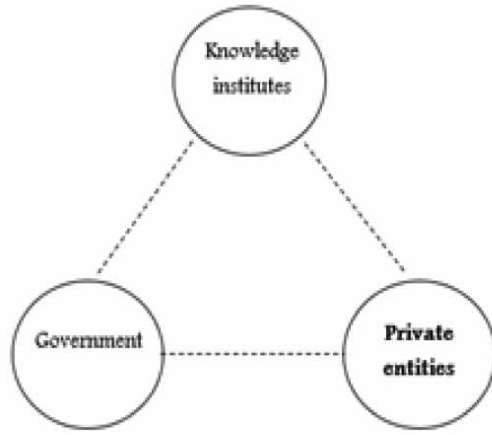
In an increasing amount of literature on sustainability, collaboration has taken center stage as tool for achieving specific objectives and as a grand strategy for delivering sustainability at scale (Odero, 2002; Lozano, 2007). Collaboration in the form of multi-stakeholder partnerships is often exciting and essential to advancing sustainability, but is likewise characterized by undefined risks and threats. Against this

background, the triple helix models can serve as an instrument to realize the harmonization of individual actions and thus to enhance collaboration. Ranga & Etzkowitz (2013) define these models as “an analytical construct that systematizes the key features of university-industry-government interactions into an ‘innovation system’ format defined according to systems theory as a set of components, relationships and functions” (p. 238). According to Dzisah & Etzkowitz (2008), the triple helix models take shape when the institutional actors seek to enhance a growing overlay of reflexive interaction to enhance the overall performance. As such, the triple helix can be seen as a reciprocal relationship in which the actors seek common ground in interest and responsibilities.

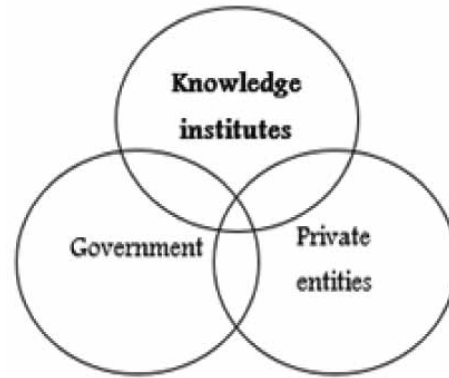
However, the research has broadened the scope of the university and prefers to talk about the knowledge institutes instead. Subsequently, the manners in which the triple helix models have become established stand in close relation with the structural development of the knowledge-driven economy. The following three models have been formulated to indicate different analogies, the statist triple helix, laissez-faire and interactive triple helix models.



Model I. Statist Triple Helix



Model II. Laissez-faire Triple Helix



Model III. Interactive Triple Helix

## Model I: Statist Triple Helix Model

### Government

The first model can be best described as the least developed model and as an initial step towards an effective multi-stakeholder partnership. Due to the government's tendency to exert overwhelming control over the performance and relation with knowledge institutes and private entities, the statist triple helix model is characterized by a limited degree of cross-sectoral interaction (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). Evident to this model is also the idea that the government tends to only involve the other institutional actors if it would be advantageous to its individual performance. The dominant position of the government is given concrete expression through innumerable "self-initiated research universities and large-scale enterprises that are affiliated to government; government policies and resolutions that are the designated points of reference; and lastly government that organizes primary innovation agents including high-tech development zones, markets for technology and intellectual property" (Petti, 2012, p. 68). As a result, with a government that tends to overshadow

the other institutional actors, there is little incentive to share intellectual capital, let alone to enhance each other's performance. With a government that tends to overshadow these actors, there exists little incentive to share intellectual capital, let alone to enhance each other's performance.

### Knowledge Institutes

In the statist triple helix model, the government seems to have caught hold of others which endangers the knowledge institutes' ability to operate as a liberated institutional actor (Etzkowitz et al., 2007, p. 15). Once again, the limited degree of interaction is further reinforced through the belief that the knowledge institutes are strongly dependent on government initiatives (Etzkowitz et al., 2007), and are accordingly described as passive and inert outside the ideas initiated and projected by the government (Etzkowitz & Zhou, 2008). In addition, the knowledge institutes such as a university is characterized as a 'teaching university' that acts on the premise of conducting basic research and providing trained and educated personnel (Etzkowitz et al., 2007). Accordingly, Etzkowitz & Zhou (2008) argue that knowledge institutes are solely acting to fulfill a 'social contract'.



### **Private Entities**

The last actor in the institutional triad involves the private entities. In line with the above, the roles and responsibilities of these institutions are largely prescribed by the government to the extent that the private entities tend to jump to the government's commands. This can be partly explained the degree to which these entities are owned by the government (Etzkowitz et al., 2007).

## **Model II: Laissez-faire Triple Helix Model**

### **Private Entities**

A second transition and polar alternative is the laissez-faire triple helix model in a somewhat higher degree of interaction exists amongst the institutional actors. Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff (2000) denote that this model "consists of separate institutional spheres with strong borders dividing them and highly circumscribed relations among the spheres" (p. 111). In this model, "the institutional actors tend to act along rigid and inertial boundaries which make cross-sectoral interaction rather indirect" (Tveit & Webjørnsen, 2011, p. 8). Evident to this model is the dominant role of the private entities in organizing collaborative efforts, which leads to individualistic attitudes. This presumption of individualism tends to make knowledge institute, private entities and government departments reluctant to share complementary resources and combine efforts across cooperative boundaries (Etzkowitz, 2003).

### **Knowledge Institutes**

Based on the laissez-faire triple helix model, the knowledge institutes enjoy sufficient discretionary powers to take a specialist role in producing knowledge that can be transformed directly into innovation or else be absorbed by the private entities (Saad et al., 2010). Notwithstanding, the degree to which these institutes are allowed to operate freely is dependent on the private entities' demands.

### **Government**

While the laissez-faire model is characterized by the

presence of individualistic attitudes, government departments are largely geared towards the regulation of social and economic mechanisms (Etzkowitz, 2003; Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013). Nevertheless, in particular circumstances, the government might go beyond their role in anticipating and providing solutions when the market cannot, or industry will not support, a certain activity (Etzkowitz, 2003). Etzkowitz states that 'market failure' serves as case to illustrate the practical application hereof; "it is agreed that the government may provide funds to the knowledge institute to support research, since it would not take place otherwise, it is accepted that there is a limited role for government" (2003, p. 306).

## **Model III: Interactive Triple Helix Model**

### **Knowledge Institutes**

The third and last development stage is the interactive model where "innovation is thought of as an outcome of cross-sectoral collaboration, rather than a prescription from either the government or private entities" (Dzisah & Etzkowitz, 2008, p. 109). As a consequence of the actors' collaborative attitude to enhance each other's performance, the model is believed to be most desirable. In addition, the interactive model recognizes the growing importance of knowledge institutes in producing intellectual capital that could be absorbed by the other institutional actors. The active role of the knowledge institutes is also embedded in the idea that they support the private entities by responding to issues that the institute might be able to address and can facilitate the government by providing advice and preparing its students to become operative in government.

### **Private Entities**

In line with the above, the private entities are actively engaged in cross-sectoral interaction with other institutional actors. In collaboration with the knowledge institutes, Etzkowitz et al. (2007) illustrate that "industry takes the role of the

knowledge institutes in developing training and research, often at the same high level as universities” (p. 16). Hence, the private entities seek to actively support the other institutional actors to enhance mutual advantage.

### **Government**

The government actively supports the developments of both knowledge institutes and private entities and seeks to strengthen their performance by means of changes in regulatory environment. By providing a wide range of incentives, the government is aware of the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in a pursuit to boost economic development.

## **5. Methods**

### **Research Design**

This section describes the manners in which the interview respondents have been selected and provides some insight into the instruments and procedures applied throughout the research. Parahoo (1997) defines this section as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed” (p. 142). In order to guarantee the desired research quality, it is important to ensure reliability and validity of the findings (Boeije, 2005; Baarda et al., 2013). The research reliability suggests that repeated outcomes are the same under identical or similar conditions and will be ensured through method triangulation and member validation. Hence, during and after the interviews, the observations have been discussed with the respondents who are then asked to determine their accuracy. This allows the respondents to critically analyze the findings and provide feedback. On the other hand, the research validity comes from the analysis and data as accurate representations of the social world in the field. This will be guaranteed through a careful selection of the interview respondents by means of purposive sampling and continuous interaction with the research supervisor and external readers.

### **Respondents**

The research sample (n=9) has been taken from the three spheres of the triple helix model and includes respondents from government departments, private entities and knowledge institutes relevant to the topic at hand. The total number of respondents is equally divided over these institutional actors. To be able to answer the research questions in the best possible manner, the selection process has been done by means of expert sampling. It is believed by Neuman (2014) that such non-probability sampling technique is “*adopted where the purpose is less to generalize to a larger population than it is to gain a deeper understanding of specific types*” (p. 149). Thus, after a critical selection of the relevant societal institutions, the respondents were selected on the basis of their responsibility for decision-making and/or privileged access to the decision-making process.

Prior to the first round of data collection, a face-to-face meeting was arranged to personally invite the respondents to take part in the research. This was done for the study to adhere to ethical guidelines by seeking informed consent of the respondents via means of a consent form. The form includes detailed information with regards to “the right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time; the central purpose of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection; comments about protecting the confidentiality of the respondents; a statement about known risks associated with participation in the study; the expected benefits to accrue to the participants in the study; and the signature of the participants as well as the researcher’s” (Creswell, 2007, p. 123).

### **Instruments**

The practical application and validity of the triple helix models is a fairly neglected subject matter in small island contexts and no statistical data has been found to indicate the existence of a formal triple helix model on Aruba. As a result, the instruments applied in the research are of qualitative nature. Mason (2002) denotes that such approach

is appropriate to study the dynamics of social relationships, like the ones apparent in triple helix partnerships. For the purpose of the research, an extensive review of the literature has been conducted to describe the form and content of the innovation systems explained in the models.

Likewise, the qualitative data has been gathered by means of three rounds of face-to-face interviews. The first round involves individual, in-depth interviews to provide a deep understanding of the institutional actors' perspectives and attitudes towards triple helix interactions. According to Neuman (2014), "*in-depth interviews enable to observe the surroundings and can use non-verbal communication and visual aids*" (p. 197). In order to have some freedom to stray from the questions and to identify new manners of seeing and understanding the subject matter, the interviews are semi-structured. Harrell & Bradley (2009) argue that this type of interviewing collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational. "*Semi-structured interviews are often used when the researcher wants to delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided*" (p. 27). Even though this type of interviewing typically contains a considerable degree of interviewer bias and costs, the researcher argues that it might generate the highest response rate. After the first round, a supportive round of individual interviews will be held to ensure the correctness of the researcher's observations. In contrast to the first and second, the last round will be completed by means of a different approach that is commonly used to interview experts on a policy level. Here, a group discussion, inspired by the Delphi-method, will be organized to identify divergence of perspectives and attitudes, and eventually enhance consensus towards a more formal collaboration model (Baarda et al., 2013). The procedures of this method will be explained in the following paragraph.

### **Procedures**

The research procedures, such as "the manners in which the time and place are set and all interview respondents are being

approached, are of great importance" (Baarda et al., 2013, pp. 88 - 89). After all agreed to the terms described in the online correspondence, date and time were set for the first round of interviews. These interviews were held during office hours and took approximately eighty minutes to complete, which was ten minutes longer than expected. Field notes and audio recordings were made to guide the researcher.

During the first round, the respondents were asked to value, characterize and assess the interactions with other actors in order to formulate a perspective towards a more formal collaboration model. The interview consisted of three parts. The first part of the interview contained an introduction to the research, after which the respondent was encouraged to share an insight into the institutional actor's position in terms of the interaction with other actors. This took around ten minutes. Then, the body of the interview is believed to be the most important part in which the respondents are asked to reflect upon the positions of others. The researcher presented three cards that indicate the fundamental characteristics of each institutional actor. To avoid confusion, the first three cards that were put down on the table illustrated different positions of only one actor. The cards were presented in such a sequence that is presented the continuum of the triple helix models. The respondents were asked a set of questions related to important factors that characterize the interaction such as mission, vision and communication. Important in this part is the reflection on both individual as well as collective roles and responsibilities. The same procedure was repeated for the other institutional actors. This section took around thirty minutes to complete. Finally, the interviews concluded with a short recap of the respondents' answers, which took approximately ten minutes. Instead of earlier procedures, all nine cards were presented to illustrate the respondent's global observation of roles and responsibilities and the accurateness of the models in relation to the Aruban practices and conditions. In the same part, the respondents were asked to indicate their preference for a particular model.

Lastly, after two rounds of data collection will be completed, six respondents will be invited for a Delphi-inspired focus group discussion. This round has not yet been conducted. During this discussion, the respondents will be presented with the findings of the first and second round of data collection, and will be offered the opportunity to discuss the results. The insights will be carefully documented by an external researcher. In a group setting, the researcher hopes to obtain the objective explained by Baarda et al. (2013, p. 61), namely to “identify divergence of beliefs and to ultimately enhance consensus”. The results of this session will contribute to the final outcome of the research and will be analyzed by means of a thematic method in order to identify recurring patterns within the data.

## 6. Preliminary Findings

Even though the subsequent findings have to be examined more thoroughly during the further continuation of this research, valuable trends concerning the practical application of the triple helix models on Aruba have already come forward during the first round of data collection. In contrast to earlier expectations, the interviews have revealed an absence of history and hands-on experience with these models. Despite the fact that bilateral collaboration efforts are relatively common on the island, the importance of interaction amongst government departments, private entities and knowledge institutes does not seem to have given concrete expression. This observation had not been anticipated, as earlier government policies underscore the importance to transition towards a knowledge-driven economy, where the movement of intellectual capital across these actors is fundamental. Recurring illustrations of tripartite partnerships such as the ‘Green Faculty’ and the ‘Smart Community’<sup>2</sup> have not been formally established, but should be, nevertheless, perceived as an initial step

towards a triple helix manner of collaboration. At the same time, the interview respondents have indicated that cross-institutional collaboration tends to occur on the basis of informal interactions; these are not laid down in any type of formal agreements.

Further, the first phase of the study surfaced a shortcoming in empirical evidence that has proven to be successful in the Aruban community. Its absence might negatively impact the attitude towards the enhancement of cross-sectoral partnerships. A possible explanation for this is that the revenues cannot yet be made visible and hence individuals seem to express individuality, rather than being geared towards the general interest. In this instance, government departments, private entities and knowledge institutes have a tendency to hoard intellectual capital instead of moving it across individual and institutional boundaries. In order to remove the potential barriers, it is essential to provide insight into those characteristics that could possibly contribute to fruitful interactions. The respondents denote that agreement on shared interest and objectives, trust, openness, awareness, communication, responsibility, and accountability, situational leadership are important ingredients, and will be further investigated throughout the continuation of the study.

Also, the respondents tend to indicate that none of the existing triple helix models represents the current manner of collaboration in its entirety, but instead argue that a balanced approach would best describe the Aruban practices and conditions. While the literature presents the models as separate entities with distinct characteristics, the respondents consider it important to situationally adjust the division of roles and responsibilities. Blindly adhering to these prescribed characteristics is believed to be detrimental to an open dialogue necessary to find

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2. Both of these initiatives have been announced, one in the educational sector and the other in a yet to be constructed integral sustainable neighborhood, using triple helix partnerships.

common ground in diverging institutional approaches. The respondents communicate that the partners adhere to different, sometimes conflicting, cooperation models. There is a sense amongst the respondents that the government abides by rigid political rules and regulations to perform their roles and responsibilities. On the other hand, private entities are mostly profit-oriented and hold short-term perspective, whereas the knowledge institutes seem to value the performance of programmed instructions to ensure the validity and accuracy of the decisions to be taken. Accordingly, the respondents believe that collaborative efforts are not logically embedded in the institutional culture and the diverging dynamics might make it challenging to be held accountable for deviation from institutional expectations.

Another recurrent theme during the first round of data collection was the impact of Aruba's geographical size on the advancement of triple helix partnerships. The degree of social capital is deemed to expedite network building through short communication lines and symbiotic relationships between the professional and private domains of life. Also, due to the institutional capacity, individual attitudes towards knowledge sharing are decisive to the manners in which the societal institution perceives collaborative efforts. Despite the existence of a number of advantages surrounding the small size, the movement of intellectual capital should not be logically assumed.

In summary, the preliminary findings have reinforced the importance to share insights into the triple helix models to enhance the success rate of triple helix partnerships on Aruba. Notwithstanding, after the completion of the first round of data collection, intriguing questions remain existent about the manners in which knowledge would need to be managed and extracted. What conditions should be in place to encourage and facilitate knowledge sharing? Who should monitor the exchange of knowledge? How should intellectual capital be qualified? What knowledge

would be needed to address sustainability challenges? How should it be quantified? What should be done to document knowledge? And who should become owner of intellectual capital? These are just a few questions that currently remain unanswered, but will be addressed during the second and third round of data collection.

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Should you have additional questions or concerns regarding this research, do not hesitate to contact Jochem Pennekamp at [j.t.j.pennekamp@gmail.com](mailto:j.t.j.pennekamp@gmail.com)

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