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Master Thesis Conflict Studies and Human Rights

Identity as a tool:

The Venezuelan migration crisis in Aruba

by

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Foreword

This thesis aims to understand the narratives of female Venezuelan irregular migrants and their personal journey in times of irregular migration. By placing their personal stories in a framework of cultural gender-based scripts, this thesis aspires to understand the struggles and hardships that these women face in the process of leaving their home country out of fear for the political, economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Through conducting the interviews, I was struck by the enduring resilience of these women and the way in which they maintained a positive outlook on their situation. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. dr. Jolle Demmers, for her warm and professional guidance in the process of writing this thesis, as well as during the period of fieldwork. In addition, I would like to thank my friends, family and partner, for their everlasting support and for always finding a way to motivate me. Lastly, I would like to thank all the participants in this research, I hope I did your story justice.

Ellen Boekelder, Utrecht, 26 July 2020

Table of contents

Foreword.....	3
Table of contents.....	4
Abstract.....	6
Acronyms and abbreviations	7
Introductory chapter.....	8
0.1 Empirical context, research question and chapter outline	9
0.2 Research aim and country-specific context.....	11
0.2.1. The Kingdom of the Netherlands: Aruba and Curacao.....	11
0.2.2. Gaps in the literature: Venezuelan migrants in Aruba.....	12
0.2.3 Legislative factors.....	13
0.3 Terminology, sensitizing concepts and language.....	15
0.4 Ontology, epistemology and positionality	15
0.4.1. The ontological perspective: relational interactions and structures.....	15
0.4.2. The epistemological perspective: critical theory	17
0.4.3. Research paradigm: critical realism and critical theory.....	17
0.4.4. Research strategy and design: a mixed research method and its limitations	18
0.4.5 Positionality of the researcher.....	19
0.5 Limits of study, research methods and participant selection.....	20
0.5.1. Research methods, societal value and research limitations	20
0.5.2 Participant selection	22
Chapter 1: Identity, gender and migration theory.....	23
1.1 Identity, gender and gender performativity: theoretical insights	23
1.1.1. Structuration theory, agency and gender	23
1.1.2. Social constructivism and the making of social identities.....	25
1.1.3. Gender performativity theory.....	26
1.1.4. Intersectionality theory.....	27
1.2 Gender, identity and migration: cultural gender-based scripts.....	28
1.2.1. Gender and cultural scripts	28
1.2.2. Cultural gender-based scripts in migration	30
1.2.3. Human trafficking and exploitation	31

Chapter 2: Politics of gender in Venezuela	34
2.1. <i>Machismo, marianismo</i> and sexual identities	34
2.1.1. Venezuelan beauty pageants and sexual identities	35
2.1.2. Miss Venezuela and the national beauty image	36
2.1.3. Colonialism and intersectionality	37
2.2. Other cultural gender-based scripts: Chavistas, the moral matriarch, the businesswoman....	37
2.2.1 The cultural gender-based script of the Chavista	38
2.2.2. The cultural gender-based script of the moral matriarch	38
2.2.3. The cultural gender-based script of the neoliberal business woman	39
Chapter 3: Performing <i>marianismo</i> in Aruba.....	40
3.1 Why and how <i>marianismo</i> is performed in the context of irregular migration	40
3.1.1. Employment opportunities in migration	41
3.1.2. Marianismo in Aruba: The Women’s Shelter	42
3.2. Implications of the performance of <i>marianismo</i> in Aruba: discrimination.....	43
3.2.1. Discrimination on the basis of hypersexualisation of Venezuelan women.....	44
3.2.2. Discrimination on the basis of language.....	45
3.2.3. Discrimination on the basis of perceived Venezuelan characteristics and social media .	46
3.2.4. Discrimination on the labour market and labour abuse	47
3.3. Organizations and community-based initiatives	48
Discussion: Hidden and apparent acculturation.....	50
4.1. Internalist and externalist rational choice theory.....	50
4.2 Thin rationality, thick rationality and cultural gender-based scripts.....	51
4.3 Evidence for conscious adaptation to <i>marianismo</i>	52
Conclusion.....	53
Bibliography	56
Appendices	63
Appendix 1: The total number of client cases, 1995-2019.	63
Appendix 2: Number of clients according to nationality, 2018-2020.....	63
Appendix 3: Total number of Venezuelan clients, 2018-2020.....	64
Appendix 4: Type of reported abuse amongst female Venezuelan migrants.....	65
Appendix 5: Plagiarism declaration.	66
Appendix 6: Informed Consent Form.....	67
Appendix 7: Interview guide	68
Appendix 8: Participant List.....	69

Abstract

Abstract: This research aims to illustrate the influence of the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* within the narratives of experiences of female Venezuelan irregular migrants who have migrated to Aruba between 2014 and 2020. In addition, it seeks to answer the question why and how *marianismo* is performed in the context of irregular migration to Aruba. Female Venezuelan irregular migrants in Aruba are subjected to violence and discrimination on the basis of their perceived characteristics and illegality. This research aims to conclude what role the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* plays in these processes of assimilation to host-country dynamics. In doing so, it explores the fields of social constructivist theory, gender theory, international migration theory and intersectionality theory to determine which concepts and framework best analyse the influence of *marianismo* on the identity of female Venezuelan irregular migrants after migrating to Aruba. Through in-depth interviews with female Venezuelan irregular migrants, as well as a literature study on the aforementioned theoretical fields and the analysis of a dataset as provided by Fundacion Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad, the Women's Shelter in Aruba, it is concluded that female Venezuelan irregular migrants perform the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* out of necessity, rather than out of personal preference or out of habit. The interviews suggest that female Venezuelan irregular migrants perform *marianismo* to generate employment opportunities that provide an income for irregular migrants. In addition, the hypersexualisation of female Venezuelan migrants adds another dimension to the script of *marianismo*, in that women are sexualised due to the excessive pronunciation of the national beauty image in Venezuela, stemming from beauty pageants in popular culture. Female Venezuelan migrants have found room to manoeuvre within these cultural gender-based scripts in order to engage in alternative fields of work, such as prostitution. A negative consequence of this is that Venezuelan women in Aruba are discriminated against in terms of language, cultural attributes and sexualisation. Their engagement in illegal prostitution expedites discrimination. In addition, international organisations aim to provide support for these migrants in times of irregular migration; however, fail to understand the normalisation of violence within Venezuelan culture. Local, community-based initiatives on the basis of religion are seen as helpful tools for these women to provide in their primary needs. It is illustrated that this support relies on trust embedded in sharing the same cultural values.

Key words: Venezuela, female migrant, irregular migration, marianismo, cultural gender-based script, Aruba, migration crisis, hypersexualisation, gender performativity.

Acronyms and abbreviations

UN	United Nations
IOM	International Organisation of Migration
R4V	Response for Venezuelans
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
R4V	Response For Venezuelans

Introductory chapter

Human migration is a process that takes place at all times. Individuals move from one place to the other in a matter of hours, minutes and even seconds. Nevertheless, migration in itself is a phenomenon that takes time to study, to understand and to comprehend. It involves multiple country-specific dynamics and is perceived differently all over the world. Human migration is made comprehensible through studying migration flows, statistics and graphs. This makes it easy to dismiss the story behind each and every moving individual. Each individual migrates for their own reasons and in viewing these motivations, one thing becomes clear. Migration impacts people. It impacts the way we see ourselves and the way others see you. The degree of impact towards processes of identity formation and negotiation differs between individuals: host country dynamics might perceive male migrants differently than female migrants. Moreover, migration factors such as legality, cultural norms and values, employment opportunities and violence influence the way we behave and move within host countries. In this research, the formation, negotiation and performance of identity is highlighted. Furthermore, it is argued that irregular female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba are particularly burdened by oppressing factors when it comes to the performance of identity.

Since 2014, an estimated 3 to 4 million Venezuelans have fled Venezuela due to systemic oppression, economic downfall and social inequalities (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The growing inequality that surfaced in Venezuela was generated predominantly by lack of employment, insecurity and food shortages (World Food Programme, 2019, p. 4) and produced a significant surge in outward migration that moved through Latin America at an alarming rate. Although the first wave of migration took place between 1998 and 2014, the number of Venezuelan migrants fleeing Venezuela sharply increased since Maduro took power in 2013 (Hampson & Osler, 2018, p. 9). In total, the number of Venezuelan migrants accounted for more than 9% of the total Venezuelan population in 2018 (Ebus, 2018). In 2019, about 60% of the total number of Venezuelan migrants fled to Colombia, Peru and Ecuador (World Food Programme, 2019, p. 1), the remainder sought refuge in the Caribbean or elsewhere. Whereas many Venezuelans migrate by foot or overland transportation towards neighbouring Latin American countries, some engage in dangerous voyages overseas towards the Caribbean islands.

The number of Venezuelans that cross the border to host countries every day in seek of refuge was estimated to be about 5000 in 2019 (UN News, 2019), which carries significant complications for receiving host countries. Host countries try to adapt to the influx of migrants and show great solidarity with their Latin American neighbours; however, they struggle with providing sufficient programmes and support to prevent human rights violations. International organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and others have produced rapports on the needs of Venezuelan migrants. Yet, most are unsuccessful in providing a full understanding of the current migration crisis and fail to incorporate organised humanitarian support programmes (Cordaid, 2019).

Many academic studies have included the effects of the migration crisis in host countries that received the largest number of migrants, such as Colombia and Ecuador (R4V, 2020; BBC News, 2019; World Food Program, 2019), whilst failing to account for the countries that suffer the most under the Venezuelan exodus due to their limited absorption capacities. Islands within the Caribbean sub-region suffer enormously under the increasing influx of Venezuelans in view of their geographical proximity, territorial boundaries and often lacking resources to handle this increase of inhabitants. Moreover, the question of responsibility is important, in the sense that some Caribbean islands find themselves as overseas territorial extensions of European states, such as the Kingdom of the Netherlands and France.

Although the division of responsibility regarding foreign policy and domestic policy is often clearly stated in governmental documents, in practice it has become evident that pointing the finger to who is responsible for migration policies is often problematic. This holds truth for Aruba, an independent entity, situated within the Caribbean sub-region, whilst falling under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Consequently, international organisations that organise support programmes to aid Venezuelans who have fled Venezuela, are caught in an intricate web of notions of responsibility, jurisdiction and domestic policies. As a result of these problematics, although not exclusively related to notions of responsibility and jurisdiction, support programmes often fall short.

Henceforth, this research will dive into the problematics surrounding the migration of Venezuelans to host countries in the context of the Venezuelan economic, social and humanitarian crisis. Moreover, its specific empirical context involving the identities of female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba will be further highlighted.

0.1 Empirical context, research question and chapter outline

The empirical starting point of this research was encountered during a long-term stay in Aruba from mid-2018 to early 2019. Dominant themes in Aruban daily conversation were stories from Venezuelans about food scarcity, the unfolding political crisis resulting from hyperinflation and the power struggle between the government and the opposition (International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 120). At that time, for Aruba, the Venezuelan crisis outed itself economically: fruit and vegetables previously imported from Venezuela now had to be resourced somewhere else, as was the case with clothes, petroleum and coffee. On top of that, the tensions surrounding the large influx of illegal migrants into Aruba were felt throughout society. Police patrols and coast guard boats were seen everywhere, illegal Venezuelans were detained in brought daylight as well as during night time. News sites such as 24Ora denounced Venezuelan migrants all over social media, using discriminative headlines to ensure that the public narrative on Venezuelans remained unison: Venezuelans are not welcome. Amidst these discriminative and often violent encounters between Venezuelan migrants and Aruban society, a large portion of the Venezuelan migrants that entered Aruba remains hidden. Irregular migrants, that is, migrants who are not in possession of a formal visa or legal permit (R4V, 2020), often seek shelter with Venezuelan relatives or Aruban allies and remain indoors out of fear of deportation. This simultaneously creates an environment of impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, amongst other forms of violence and exploitation. Irregular migration thus creates a specific set of insecurities and threats to the well-being of Venezuelan migrants. Although official numbers are never definitive, due to undocumented chain migration and practices of human trafficking, it is expected that by the end of 2020, over 22.000 Venezuelan migrants will have reached Aruba (R4V, 2020). Aruba faces specific challenges regarding this influx of Venezuelan migrants, and with that, the protection of these migrants.

Reports have shown that next to discrimination, gender-based violence is a common phenomenon amongst irregular Venezuelan migrants in Aruba (R4V, 2020). In international migration, female migrants are often disproportionately targeted by human traffickers as they are subjected to specific gender-based threats. The current human trafficking of Venezuelans in the Caribbean area is primarily focused on sex tourism, which includes forced prostitution and exploitation of young women and girls (John, 2019, p. 442). The historical influence of global patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity and the notion of female submissiveness has produced specific threats to women which include gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Especially in times of migration, in which women find themselves in unprotected and unregulated migration processes, these notions find resonance.

Furthermore, the gendered pretence of these notions of violence, human trafficking and discrimination find their origin in human behaviour. Being female in one culture holds specific

knowledge on behaviour, perceptions and expectations, whereas these might completely differ in another cultural context. More specifically, the influence of migration on culture, gender dynamics and identity is academically acknowledged and pertains to various fields of study such as international migration theory, social identity theory and intersectionality theory. Studies on the Venezuelan migration crisis often involve various statistics, charts and percentages, which makes it is easy to forget that there are human beings behind these statistics. Each migrant carries personal motivations, a sense of identity and specific necessities resulting from their urge to leave their home country. Venezuelan migrants move from one culturally dominant context to the other and often find themselves in disassociation with the country dynamics. A sense of self, one's identity, is challenged, as it is a social construct formed by social contexts. Different rules of behaviour, perceptions of gender and culturally infused societies require specific adaptations to behaviour within the social spheres in order to accommodate integration in the host country. Moreover, support programmes implemented to aid Venezuelan migrants in host countries tend to focus on the economic dependency of Venezuelan migrants, which, in turn, influences their position in the host society.

This research studies these sets of behaviour, or scripts, which are subjected to cultural and gendered norms and values of the country of origin, as well as the host country. These scripts are employed and performed by female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba in the context of irregular migration. These scripts dictate their behaviour and, as will be discussed, benefit their chances at a better quality of life in the host country. This research aims to understand how and why irregular female Venezuelan migrants resort to the particular behavioural scripts of *marianismo*. What these scripts entail and how they are performed in the context of irregular migration will be discussed in the following chapters. The guiding research question and sub-questions that underlie this research are the following:

Why and how do female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba perform the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* that highlights traditional gender roles, in the context of irregular migration between 2014 and 2020?

1. In which way do processes of social identity formation establish cultural gender-based scripts and how do underlying cultural and gender norms play into this?
2. How are Venezuelan women portrayed and sexualised in popular culture and media, and how does this play into the formation of the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*?
3. How does intersectionality come into play in the (in)ability to redefine cultural gender-based scripts?
4. How do female Venezuelan irregular migrants (re)define these scripts and what room for manoeuvre do they identify and act upon?
5. How is the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* perceived within Aruban society?
6. How is this connected system of oppression rooted in cultural gender-based scripts addressed and countered by aid organisations?

The following chapters will discuss these questions in depth. Chapter one will discuss identity, gender and migration to demonstrate how these fields of theory connect to each other. It will discuss the concept of cultural gender-based scripts and how these are formed according to cultural and gendered norms of behaviour, as stated in sub-question one. In doing so, it will highlight important theoretical influences to this debate, stemming from structuration theory, social constructivism, gender performativity theory, international migration theory and intersectionality theory.

Chapter two will provide an in-depth study of the cultural and gendered norms of Venezuela with regards to popular culture, in order to understand the underlying context of *machismo*, *marianismo*, sexual identities and the hypersexualisation of Venezuelan woman. This section will aim to answer sub-

question two and three. Here, the influence of Venezuelan popular culture on processes of identity formation amongst young Venezuelan women will be discussed.

Chapter three will include an analysis on how and why *marianismo* is performed in the context of irregular migration to Aruba. This section will answer sub-question four, five and six, and will return to the main research question. It will discuss the implications of performing scripts and will formulate the response of aid-organisations to these problematics. After chapter three, a discussion will follow to position this research in a broader academic debate of apparent and hidden cultural behaviour to recognise the limitations of this research. Lastly, the overall conclusion will follow to summarise the discussed phenomena and to conclude on the theoretical and empirical topics that have been discussed.

0.2 Research aim and country-specific context

Host countries that are particularly burdened with the Venezuelan migration flow, “considering their small size or limited absorption capacity” (R4V, 2019, p. 1), are islands in the Caribbean located above Venezuela which share a maritime border with Venezuela. For the Caribbean, the maritime border between Venezuela and the islands remains problematic in terms of illegal cross-overs. In total, the Caribbean sub-region – which includes the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Aruba and Curacao - hosts around 147.000 Venezuelan migrants together (R4V, 2019, p. 1). In the Caribbean, the most necessary forms of support are protection and integration. Out of these thousands of migrants, 100.000 have said to require protection and another 16.000 more experience trouble with integration in host communities (R4V, 2020, p. 129) Here, it is vital to emphasise that the Caribbean sub-region is particularly vulnerable to excess migration from Venezuela. Due to the limited absorption capacity of the Caribbean islands and the maritime borders, migration towards the islands often includes dangerous journeys oversea, human smuggling via air traffic and human trafficking via migration chains. The smallest territorial bodies within the aforementioned Caribbean sub-region, and thus the area with the most limited absorption capacity of Venezuelan migrants, are the countries that are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

0.2.1. The Kingdom of the Netherlands: Aruba and Curacao

The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of four constituent countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, each of which operate on their own autonomy. The other islands that are part of the Kingdom and are also located in the Caribbean region. Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius are particular municipalities that adhere to the legislation of the Netherlands. Kingdom ministries include the Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Ministry of Defence, which administer the policy on behalf of all countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1954, pp. art. 3, lid 1). The relevance of this information lies in the responsibility of the countries to handle domestic issues independently, meaning that the four countries are responsible for their respective migration policies. For Aruba and Curacao, responses to the Venezuelan migration crisis are one of these independent responsibilities. Although Dutch policy dictates that the Kingdom is guaranteed to step in if necessary, the initial responsibility rests on the shoulders of the islands’ respective governments (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2017, p. 5). The question of responsibility has proven to be problematic during the course of this research, since it took multiple conversations with a policy officer of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Dutch Ministry of Defence, to understand this intricate relationship between the Netherlands and the Caribbean islands within the Kingdom.

Historically, migration between Venezuela and the islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands consisted mainly of labour migration (Oostindie, 2019). However, since the crisis in Venezuela unfolded in 2014, this migration route has evolved to include other motivations of migration, such as migration based on human rights violations, due to food and medicine shortages (BBC News, 2019), and motives for chain migration (Oostindie, 2019). Chain migration is a common phenomenon within the Venezuelan migration crisis, as it closely connects to reuniting families and labour networks (Maldonado, 2020, p. 2). Venezuelans flee to family and friends in host countries if there are opportunities of labour. In turn, they notify their friends and family that are left behind of the labour opportunities. These opportunities allow them to generate more remittances that can be sent back to Venezuela. The vacancies are often illegally fulfilled.

0.2.2. Gaps in the literature: Venezuelan migrants in Aruba

Migration processes mostly take place by boat or by airplane, departing either from neighbouring countries or directly from Venezuelan grounds. In 2018, both Aruba and Curacao were estimated to host over 16.000 illegal Venezuelans (Ebus, 2018). This number is expected to reach 22.000 migrants by the end of 2020 (R4V, 2020). Aruba is generally omitted in much scholarly work since the majority of the research is focused on the biggest island in the Dutch Kingdom, Curacao. For example, the concept of ‘tragomeisjes’ was developed in describing the illegal employment of undocumented Venezuelan migrant women as escorts and, in most cases, sex workers by local bars on Curacao called snèks (Hendriksen, 2020). It is one of the dominant research topics on the effects of the Venezuelan migration crisis in the Caribbean. Underreporting in the media hinders knowing whether ‘tragomeisjes’ are a common phenomenon on Aruba. The lack of academic studies on the Venezuelan exodus towards Aruba is noticeable, hence the focus of this research on Aruba. This academic negligence has serious consequences towards policy analysis, as an incomplete oversight of the country-specific problematics with regards to the Venezuelan migration crisis may cause skewed analysis outcomes. Apart from the absence of research about the effects of the Venezuelan migration crisis on Aruba, a three-fold motivation for this focus will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, research on the Venezuelan migration crisis in Aruba is justified in terms of territorial limits. Even though both Curacao and Aruba host more than 16.000 illegal Venezuelan migrants, Curaçao comprises more than double the square meter of territory than Aruba does. Whereas Curacao comprises of 444 m², Aruba only comprises of 180 m² (Anon., 2020). Taking into account the territorial limits, the equivalent number of Venezuelan migrants seem even more troublesome for Aruba.

Secondly, within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba is the Caribbean island closest to Venezuela. The island resides within a mere 24 kilometres from the coast of Paraguaná, an island that belongs to the Venezuelan province Falcón. In the absence of clouds and standing on the famous Hooiberg in Aruba, the coast of Venezuela is visible. Due to the close geographical proximity of Aruba, Venezuelan migrants often encounter Aruba first, depending on the point of departure.

Thirdly, Aruba is the only independent country within the Caribbean region of the Kingdom of the Netherlands that acceded to the 1967 Protocol of the UN Refugee Convention. Officially, one is only recognised a refugee, and thus allowed to seek refuge, when, amongst others, in danger of political persecution. This was stated in the 1951 refugee convention which was ratified by the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1956 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017, p. 1). In 1986, the same year that Aruba gained autonomy, Aruba acceded to the 1967 Protocol. The 1967 Protocol is an extension of the 1951 Refugee Convention and includes those who are refugees as a result of events happening before January 1st, 1951 (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 1967). However, “while Aruba acceded to the 1967 Protocol in 1986, it has not enacted specific

legislation to implement its obligations under it” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017, p. 1). Whereas Aruba did not ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention, they did ratify the 1967 Protocol, which means that they are obliged to comply towards the agreements of the 1951 refugee convention. Here, those who are part of civil society and are not in danger of political persecution, are thought of to seek wealth on Aruba and are thus not entitled to refuge. This specific legislation brings challenges to procedures of migration. The institute responsible for dealing with migration in Aruba is DIMAS, the ‘Departamento di Integracion, Maneho y Admision di Stanhero’ (The Department of Integration and Management of Foreigners) (DIMAS, 2020).

Moreover, it can take up to six months for Venezuelans to obtain a temporary visa in Aruba (Berwick, 2019), meaning that during these six months Venezuelan migrants remain behind closed doors, yet on the island. The majority of Venezuelan migrants that seek refuge in Aruba are not recognised as a refugee and are rarely granted asylum. Henceforth, this research will abandon any terminology that relates to the ambiguous refugee status of Venezuelan migrants and will refer to Venezuelans that enter Aruba illegally as ‘migrants’. Although it is recognised that any form of terminology is composed of some form of negative connotations, the term ‘irregular migrant’ will be frequently used to denote the normative assumptions that come with terms such as ‘illegal’ and ‘undocumented’.

0.2.3 Legislative factors

Additional to the previously identified gap in the literature concerning empirical research on Aruba as opposed to Curacao, a gap in the literature on refugee and migrants can be identified. Whereas most studies focus on violence against refugees, only a few acknowledge violence against migrants. What does it mean for the protection of migrants if they are not recognised under the Refugee Convention? A 2017 poll demonstrated that only 29% of Venezuelan migrants flee because of political reasons, whereas 63% of Venezuelan migrants flee because of economic reasons (Hampson & Osler, 2018, p. 9). This means that the majority of Venezuelan migrants that flee Venezuela are not recognised as a refugee but rather as a fortune seeker. As discussed in the paragraphs above, the migrant status, as opposed to the refugee status, does not guarantee asylum. The definition of the concept ‘refugee’ the 1951 Refugee Convention is the following:

“the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who [...] “owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951, pp. 14, Art 1)

Important in this definition is that multiple reasons for fleeing a home country are mentioned; however, there is no mention of gender as a source of threats to well-being. Gender-based violence amongst migrants is a common phenomenon that threatens the well-being of those fleeing their home country, although it is not recognised by the UNHCR in this declaration. Pittaway and Bartolomei mention that in this convention, it is not clearly stated that the notion of gender-based violence suffices for persecution or that gender-based violence legitimises the claim for refugee status (2001, p. 21). Arguably, the absence of specified information and pertinent gender blindness constitutes the structural discrimination of victims of gender-based violence. This is important for migrants who flee from the danger of gender-based violence, as it is not seen as a legitimate reason to seek refuge in another country. In the years that

followed, essential conventions were added to this definition through global and regional conventions and declarations (Camilleri & Hampson, 2018, p. 9). One of which is the Cartagena Declaration of 1984, which added to the definition of one being considered a refugee those:

“who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order” (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, 1984, pp. 36, Art. 3).

Whereas in the 1984 definition of refugee status, gender is also not mentioned, it does broaden the definition of being a refugee by including other threats than being politically persecuted. It allows for a wider spectrum of security threats to qualify as a reason to seek refuge. Eventually, in 2018, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights adopted Resolution 2/18, in which it is recognised that:

“violations of human rights, violence and insecurity, and persecution on the basis of their political opinion [...] has particularly impacted groups in situations of exclusion and historical discrimination, such as children and adolescents, women, older persons..” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organisation of American States, 2018).

In addition, this resolution recognises the increased risk of Venezuelans with regards to “sexual and gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, human trafficking” (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organisation of American States, 2018). Nevertheless, the official definition of being a refugee does not allow for victims who flee based on sexual and gender-based violence. However, specific resolutions have paid attention to the increased risks of sexual exploitation for Venezuelan migrants and facilitate, in theory, the harbouring of Venezuelan migrants in host countries to shield them from this violence.

In sum, this research aims to provide more in-depth knowledge of the effects of the Venezuelan migration crisis on Aruba. Specific issues regarding territorial, geographical and legislative factors justify the focus on Aruba as a host country. Moreover, the specific legal framework in which these migrants are positioned undermines the migration process to host countries. This research aims to understand the position of the female Venezuelan migrant in Aruba. Eventually, by mapping the different factors that influence identity performance, it aims to connect these processes with the overall question for help. In doing so, this research looks at how international organisations, local, community-based initiatives and the Aruban government can play into these areas of support.

The following section explains the ontology and epistemology that underlie the research paradigm, strategy, method and research steps of this research. It will elaborate upon the ontology of relational interactions and structures, the epistemology of critical theory and critical realism, the research strategy of qualitative research, the research method of in-depth semi-structured interviews and will discuss the main research questions in depth.

0.3 Terminology, sensitizing concepts and language

This research employs various terminology and concepts which are deliberately chosen to represent the current migration dynamics in Aruba. As discussed above, this research employs the term ‘migrant’ over refugee, since not all Venezuelans are recognized as a refugee according to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. In order to avoid defining the ambiguous migration status of most migrants, as well as steering clear of the negative connotations that come with the terms ‘illegal’ and ‘undocumented’, this research refers to migrants as ‘irregular migrants’. When conducting the interviews for this research, it was never implied that the interviewee possessed an illegal migration status, nor was it assumed that a migrant was legal. Although it was not specifically asked, most interviewees chose to mention their migration status themselves.

Moreover, this research will engage in a thorough analysis of gender-specific dynamics. This means that specific mentions of patriarchy, the male gender, the female gender, female submissiveness and other gender-related concepts will be discussed. However, by no means does this research assume that gender is a binary concept that only allows the normative assumption that there are two genders: the male and the female. This research recognizes that gender is a spectrum and that the biological component of gender does not represent how one identifies. Having said this, this research focuses on female Venezuelan migrants. During the interviews, specific attention was paid to the way in which these migrants identify and refer to themselves. The term ‘female Venezuelan migrant’ was only used when interviewees referred to themselves as female. Furthermore, the term of traditional gender roles does not reflect my personal beliefs on which roles should be performed by which gender. Rather, traditional gender roles are discussed as a concept that is historically constructed and carries cultural value, in which it is never assumed nor implied that this is the way each gender should behave. The concepts of gender and traditional gender roles are taken as an analytical category and will be treated as such, with no intention of establishing a normative narrative.

Lastly, this research employs the term of cultural gender-based scripts. This term is composed through an extensive analysis of the concept of culture, gender and behavioural scripts, related to gender performativity. Whereas the formation of this concept will be further discussed in chapter 2, it is important to highlight that the country-specific scripts of Venezuela are not exclusive nor exhaustive of all culturally formed behavioural scripts that pertain to Venezuelans. The specific scripts that will be discussed, the script of *marianismo*, the Chavista, the neoliberal businesswoman and that of the moral matriarch, are examples of scripts that were encountered in the analysis of the literature and by no means represent all behavioural scripts in Venezuelan culture.

0.4 Ontology, epistemology and positionality

The foundation of a research, that is, its ontological properties and its epistemological properties, are influenced by the positionality of the researcher. The way in which a research is perceived is, thus, always subjected to the researchers’ personal views, cognitive processes and position with regards to the research subject. Even though the research is intended to carry an objective view on the subject matter, it is important to recognize the influence of the positionality within the conducted research.

0.4.1. *The ontological perspective: relational interactions and structures.*

The ontological nature of this research adheres to the principles of agency, structures and meaning. An ontological perspective is what directs research from its emergence into existence towards its

conclusions in order to provide a guiding pathway into the realm of theory. It holds specific knowledge on the researchers' point of view, its relation with other dependant factors within the research, and it determines the research' implications. Moreover, the ontology highlights the underlying claims of 'being' and sheds lights on 'what drives humans' (Demmers, 2017, p. 16), which are crucial in understanding how individuals position themselves in the social world. For this research, the ontology entails the behaviour of individuals in social interaction, and more specifically, the meaning of behaviour that is on the one hand guided by rules as structures and, on the other hand, guided by individual actions as rooted in behaviour. Humans act out of, and to generate, meaning in interaction with each other. How this interaction takes shape, tells us what knowledge is valuable to understand, such as cultural scripts and notions of gender. As this research suggests, human behaviour is subjected to processes of identification from within, which are expressed outward in interaction within systems of culture, gender and migration.

This research employs the ontological perspective of relational interactions combined with the ontological perspective of structures, systems and conditions. These ontological perspectives take their origin from Jennifer Mason's *Qualitative Research* (2018), in which she discusses the ontological properties of certain types of qualitative research. For this research, multiple ontological properties are taken and combined, such as the ontology of structures, agency, identity and meaning. It is believed that individuals perform social scripts as a way to act out their identity, influenced by culture and gender norms, in order to position themselves in specific structures. Identity does not only allow one to express oneself; it serves a function. The question that remains is the question of agency: is the instrumentalisation of identity done unconsciously, or is agency actively pursued by means of strategic deliberation? In other words: is the performance of identity apparent or hidden?

The ontology of relational interactions is essential in this research since it is thought of to feature the social interactions between actors and the meaning this generates. Additionally, Donati and Archer argue that the perspective of relational sociology functions as an antidote to the 'flat social ontology' that was established in social sciences throughout the years, which diverged sociologists' attention to the 'ideal types of individualistic modernity' (2015, pp. 7, 15). Here, individualistic modernity is what separates modern social structures into individualised identities (Farrugia, 2014, p. 295), generating unilateral fields of study. By contesting the individualistic study of social interactions, the perspective of relational interaction aims to study social interaction from both sides of the interaction, since there are multiple identities involved in social interaction. As mentioned before, it is shown that relational interactions find the connection to social structures. This research aspires to implement the perspective of structures, systems and conditions in processes of migration to determine the specific conditions that govern, shape and position the relational interaction of irregular female Venezuelan migrants in the public domain. Moreover, structures are often discussed in combination with agency, that is, the individuals' ability to alter how the social world is organised (Demmers, 2017, p. 16). However, structures are, in principle, unobservable in the social world (Wight, 2006, p. 122), which makes them arduous to incorporate into social research.

In most cases, it is up to the researcher to theoretically determine which observable aspects of the social worlds represent these structures, systems and conditions and how they manifest themselves in the social world. For this research, it is the cultural gender-based scripts that are deemed observable, which are performed in an international system of migration. In sum, the ontological perspectives of relational interactions and structures, systems and conditions both harbour intrinsic value to understanding the manifestation and alteration of cultural gender-based scripts as present in the process of migration from Venezuela to Aruba.

To put the ontology of this research into practical terms and to warrant consistency with the theoretical framework, it will now be explained how the ontology of this research is positioned in the theoretical debate as discussed before. The ontologies of relational interactions and structures, systems

and conditions translate to this research in terms of cultural gender-based scripts. The specific type of relational interaction that will be pursued as a unit of analysis in this research is the configuration, the performance and the alteration of specific cultural gender-based scripts. Secondly, structures, systems and conditions will be translated to the system of international migration, that is, how these scripts are employed in times of international, irregular migration. Similarly, cultural and gender norms can be regarded as systems as well: they provide rules for behaviour in social interaction. Thirdly, this thesis aims to understand why female Venezuelan migrants attain to the specific cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* when they migrate. The meaning of this script, the identity that it allows one to perform, is an essential unit of analysis. It is therefore that this research can be dubbed ‘explanatory’.

0.4.2. The epistemological perspective: critical theory

The epistemological stance of this research finds its origin in the creation of a cultural puzzle and stems from a critical point of reasoning which is motivated by critical theory and critical realism. Epistemology is the fundamental debate of ‘knowing’ (Demmers, 2017, p. 16) and is imperative to understanding how individuals know what they know. As mentioned by Mason, the epistemology expresses the reasoning behind data generation techniques of a particular research project and aims to understand the validity of the research (2018, p. 7). For this research, a combination of Mason’s viewpoint of critical realism and critical theory is taken to guarantee its coherence with the ontological perspective. Critical theory highlights the social processes and power relations in the social world, whereas critical realism encourages research to look for underlying mechanisms that shape the ‘real world’ (Mason, 2018, pp. 8, 9). These perspectives combine critical epistemological thinking with how to constitute data, and both focus on social processes in the real world. In studying gender-based structures, social processes in the real world are accentuated and in search of underlying mechanisms, structures, systems and conditions prevail.

As will be argued, an example of these structures is global patriarchy. Through analysing cultural gender-based scripts as underlying mechanisms that attain to gendered power relations and social-historical processes, this research aims to expose how structured gendered and cultural norms are performed in cultural gender-based scripts of behaviour. Further reasoning to justify the research design and method relies on the formulated intellectual puzzle as proposed by Mason (2018), which for this research revolves around a causal-predictive puzzle. The causal-predictive puzzle is formulated to study the dynamics of “what influence x has on y ” (Mason, 2018, p. 12). In this study, this translates to how the performance of cultural gender-based scripts such as *marianismo* is influenced by international migration, and in turn, how international migration influences the performance of these scripts.

0.4.3. Research paradigm: critical realism and critical theory

The research strategy evolves around the determined epistemological stance, as discussed in the previous paragraph. This epistemological stance, dubbed a research paradigm, is a combination of critical theory and critical realism. Critical realism incorporates perspectives of “ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgemental rationality” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. xi). The combination of ontological realism and epistemological relativism is based on the notion that both the epistemological and the ontological perspective are continuously independent (Al-Amoudi & Willmott, 2011, p. 32). In combination with judgemental rationality, this translates to a rational evaluation of both the epistemology and the ontology of social research. What this means in practical terms is that critical realism calls for a continuous evaluation of the positioning of the research in the scientific domain. In terms of this research, critical realism elaborates on the fact that the real world is “theory-laden, not theory-determined” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 182). Thus, through the use of theories, social patterns or events are formed, using the principle

of rational judgement (Fletcher, 2017, p. 182) (Bhaskar, 1998, p. xi). Critical theory adds that in these rationally selected social patterns or events, the manifestation of dominant social relations is highlighted (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 10). The dominant social relations, here, are central in analysing cultural gender-based scripts by explaining the relevance of gender-related concepts. Whereas critical realism pursues to assess conditions of social struggles, critical theory adds the domain of dominant social relations to these social conditions. This research thus represents a dialectic notion: on the one hand, it will look at structures and conditions that facilitate the manifestation of discrimination or violence to victims, and on the other hand, it will look at the perpetrator and how its behaviour can be explained through performance of cultural gender-based scripts.

0.4.4. Research strategy and design: a mixed research method and its limitations

As the principle of explanatory research guides this research, the best-fitted research design is qualitative research. Strategy-wise, this research included a qualitative study of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Venezuelan migrant women who fled to Aruba between 2014 and 2020. Consequently, in-depth interviews have been conducted with organisations that implement aid-programmes to assist Venezuelan migrants. Furthermore, the research focuses on the figuration of cultural gender-based scripts in practice, that is, how cultural gender-based scripts are performed in Aruba. Cultural gender-based scripts are underlying behavioural scripts that are hard to recognize in social interaction. Nevertheless, through conducting interviews, this research aims to uncover these cultural gender-based scripts by searching for keywords and identifiers in the answers given to the interview questions. These answers are then interpreted in accordance with the theory that surrounds the formation of these scripts. Specific interview questions aimed at uncovering certain cognitive patterns, mental connections that are formed through culturally-laden gender perceptions and the performance of these ideas function to determine how the participants perceive themselves in the process of migration. Amongst others, cultural gender-based scripts are recognized through naming, a practice that represents how a particular social group is seen within a society-specific context (Bhatia, 2005, p. 8). One example is the interview question aimed at determining how the participants see themselves. Answers varied from being a mother, a wife, a woman, to being a migrant, a domestic worker, or by naming character traits. These answers hold specific interpretable information on how one performs their identity during processes of social interaction. This information surfaced after conducting the interviews with both the participants and the organisations, by engaging in an in-depth analysis of gathered data.

After the data-gathering period in Aruba, one of the organisations that was interviewed, the Women's Shelter in Aruba, made available a dataset that required a quantitative analysis of the specific cases of clients that have applied to the shelter for help. Although the quantitative data will be used as a tool to understand the narrative of irregular female Venezuelan migrants rather than to draw robust conclusions on patterns of migration, the information that is included in this dataset is of intrinsic value. The data received from the Shelter is extensive and includes detailed information on the reported forms of abuse (Appendix 3 and 4). Nevertheless, the data has some shortcomings:

- Due to the multilingual nature of Aruba, comments in the datasets were made in either English, Dutch, Papiamentu or Spanish. When configuring the data, the data was subjected to the researchers' personal interpretation and translation skills.
- Due to the influence of the American dating system in Aruba, the dates of the intake conversations with clients were occasionally written as mm-dd-yy, instead of the European system of dd-mm-yy. In these cases, this research followed the logical order of the document itself.

- At times, the data was incomplete, since the client has the fundamental right to not share all personal data. All names were removed before receiving the data and some fields were left blank for the reason that the client chose not to share specific details.
- The data is subjected to the researchers' personal interpretation, meaning that without a background in psycho-social care, the client's case was categorized. With the guidance of the social worker's notes, it was determined if each case was a case of emotional, physical, sexual, sustenance, financial abuse, or if other problematics were involved, such as stalking, a divorce process, depression, infidelity and behavioural issues. This also means that this data was secondary: the researcher did not speak to each of these clients in person and was therefore subjected to the interpretation of the social worker who conducted the intakes.
- As this research took place in the first half of 2020, the data collection period took place in March 2020. This means that the data collected for 2020, which was gathered after the data collection period, is incomplete. Data for 2020 reaches until April 2020, whereas the data for 1995-2019 includes a full year of intakes.

Due to these shortcomings, the data gathered from the Women's Shelter will not be employed to draw robust conclusions. Instead, this research will draw upon the gathered data to understand patterns, local-level dynamics and instances of abuse that might be connected to clients' migration status or nationality.

0.4.5 Positionality of the researcher

Throughout this introduction, it was mentioned multiple times that the gathered interview results and data are subjected to the interpretation of the researcher. Here, it is important to mention the positionality of the researcher. In order to research the cultural gender-based scripts that prevail in times of migration to a host country, it is important to be aware of the cultural gender-based script one performs in itself. During the research period, every day it became clearer that I am not Venezuelan nor an irregular migrant. Therefore, I could not understand the emotional impact of migration due to a crisis in one's home country, nor am I equipped to fully understand how this influences how one performs their identity. I personally have never felt the looming insecurity that comes with being an irregular migrant. Although I continuously evaluated my position as an interviewer and a researcher whilst conducting the interviews, I will never fully understand the hidden meaning and cultural significance of certain instances of naming, framing and personal identity.

Notwithstanding, I have lived outside of my home-country in the past. In 2016, I moved to Buenos Aires and in 2019, I moved to Aruba. Although with vastly different motivations for migration, I was able to sympathise with the feeling of accommodating to different societal norms and values in the performance of your identity. Moreover, as an alumni of a bachelor programme focused on Latin American studies, I was able to position the historical events mentioned during the interviews in a chronological timeline that was drenched in significant Venezuelan history. Lastly, I am a Dutch citizen and was able to find commonalities with the Aruban societal context, as Aruba is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

0.5 Limits of study, research methods and participant selection

0.5.1. Research methods, societal value and research limitations

The data collection method employed to conduct this research included semi-structured in-depth interviews and observations during the field work period. The data analysis method included retroductive analysis. It is crucial here to mention that this research was conducted in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. The consequences of this pandemic concerning this research are that the research period was prematurely terminated. Government responses in Aruba included shutting down air traffic between the island and surrounding regions, meaning that alternative research methods had to be adopted in order to complete the period of data gathering. One consequence is that the interviews with participants one through thirteen were held in person, whereas the interviews with participants fourteen through seventeen had to be conducted via video calls. It is essential to note that participants seemed more reluctant to share personal experiences via video calls because of the lack of personal contact. This specific absence of rapport, the interpersonal relation based on trust between the interviewer and the interviewee, obstructed the ability to have deep, meaningful conversations. It is, therefore, that the interviews with participants fourteen through seventeen required a different tactic in maintaining a conversation, which may have led to more inconsequential research findings. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for thorough participant observation in this research, as maintaining social distancing was deemed key to diminish the spread of the virus.

The projected goal of conducting in-depth interviews was to discover undocumented information on the internalised identities and scripts that Venezuelan migrant women on Aruba perform in order to answer sub-questions four and five. Prior knowledge on this topic stems from an earlier long-term stay on Aruba in 2018, in which daily conversations with Venezuelans included topics such as discrimination and sexual violence against female Venezuelan irregular migrants. In the initial phase of this research, sexual violence was taken as the primary unit of analysis. However, during the period of data gathering, it became clear that although there is evidence of sexual violence against female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba, it was not conclusive nor sufficient to prove the hypothesis. Instead, an alternative pattern became clear: the way female irregular Venezuelan migrants behaved served a function in the system of international migration, which was both influenced by culture as by gender norms. In contrast, by performing these cultural gender-based scripts, Venezuelan women found themselves in situations of discrimination, domestic or specific gender-based violence. Henceforth, the data gathered through interviews served as empirical projections of theoretical ideas that were founded during the literature study prior to the fieldwork. The empirical data thus illustrates what has been found in documents, articles and other forms of written knowledge.

In this research, the sensibility of these stories of livelihoods is prioritised. At any point, during the interview, the interviewee had full agency to stop the interview or refrain from telling their story. Before conducting the interview, the interviewee was asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix 6), which included the premise that interviewees can withdraw their interviews from the research at any point. The research was first explained extensively to the participant and so the participant was fully aware of the aims of this research. It was discussed that by publishing this research, there would be no mention of their name or any other personal information. This, too, held truth for the interviews conducted with the organisations that provide support programmes for Venezuelan migrants in Aruba. In some cases, such as the Women's Shelter in Aruba, it was asked that the name of the organisation could be mentioned to attain to the data's credibility.

Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were prepared to be able to let these women tell their stories rather than imposing questions that would have forced them to ‘mould’ their story into a predetermined storyline. The interview guide implemented to conduct these interviews included main themes, rather than determined questions (Appendix 7). This research aims to read the interviews in an interpretative manner, to be able to “infer about something outside the interview action itself” (Mason, 2018, p. 135). Here, one of the limitations that surfaced was language. Having learned Spanish during my bachelor and being able to professionally converse in Spanish did not suffice to grasp the full meaning converged during the interviews. Although I asked participants to explain some words that I did not understand, language serves as a tool to convey social and cultural meaning and by not being part of a certain culture, not all results could be properly interpreted at the level a native Spanish speaker would be able to.

Another limitation that was properly weighed during these interviews, was the consideration of ethics. Irregular migration due to a crisis might cause serious traumas to the individual that engaged in this journey. This research made sure that the participants were fully comfortable in telling their story and if touched upon a sensitive subject, it was urged that if they did not wish to share these particular stories, they were not obliged to do so. By no means is it the intention of this research to force participants to relive traumas and only if they wished to discuss these stories, they were able to. Moreover, two out of the seventeen participants were nine and twelve years old. Before conducting these short interviews, the mother, as well as the child itself, were asked for consent to conduct the interview. Consequently, the majority of the interviews with irregular Venezuelan migrants was conducted at their residence address. This information was handled discretely in order to harbour the safety of the irregular migrants. However, it is precisely because of these ethical considerations that this research attains to its societal value. The stories told are representations of hidden migrant groups, who rarely engage in documented research on their personal stories. In most research, irregular migrants are reduced to numbers, to keep track of the migrant movement from Venezuela in Aruba. By posing this research as a platform for them to tell their story, this research aims to generate a deeper understanding of the hardships these Venezuelan female irregular migrants face.

Lastly, this research did not engage in practices of sampling since it was not guaranteed that the number of interviews to be conducted was sufficient to use sampling as a valid research technique. Secondly, I do not believe that personal instances of discrimination and violence can be generalised for the entire female Venezuelan population on Aruba. The data that was gathered during the interviews was stored through handwritten notes and audio recordings which were later transcribed verbatim. Here, too, the quality of recordings and the language skills of the researcher can be seen as limitations to this research. When encountering words that I believed carried cultural meaning or that I was not able to transcribe due to the lacking quality of the recording, I reached out to a befriended Venezuelan man currently living in the Netherlands to help me understand these specific sets of words. After transcribing, the data was coded accordingly and analysed through the practice of retroductive analysis. In retroductive analysis, the combination of inductive and deductive processes of analysis is central (Ragin & Amoroso, 2019, p. 44). In essence, this means that the conducted interviews were not only seen as inductive representations of Venezuelan culture, the personal stories also functioned as a tool for deduction of what is deemed important in irregular migration to Aruba. Retroductive analysis is of essence to this research as it uncovers the interrelation between the performativity of cultural gender-based scripts and migration. Finally, the conducted interviews were stored on an external hard drive. This way, the data was never stored online in which it could have been subjected to cyber-insecurity.

0.5.2 Participant selection

In this section, it will be illustrated why this particular participant group of irregular female Venezuelan migrants was asked to participate in this research. Firstly, the choice of participants was a fluid process rather than a static pick-and-go action. With this research, I was dependent on the referral of existing participants to possible participants, otherwise known as the snowball-effect (Cohen & Arieli, 2011, p. 424). I was referred to some of the women who participated in this research through my pre-existing network before conducting the interviews. As mentioned before, I was an inhabitant of Aruba in late 2018 and early 2019. During this period I got to know various individuals who were part of the Venezuelan community on Aruba. Moreover, one share of this participant group are employees of organisations that implement aid programmes for Venezuelan migrants. The organisations mentioned other organisations that they work with, henceforth providing me with a list of whom to ask to participate in this research. The total participant list can be found in Appendix 8. Other restrictions to the selection of participants were the time frame of the research question. Once migrated to Aruba, participants adapt to local norms. The longer an individual has been in Aruba, the longer they had time to adapt. In other words, the more internalised would these norms have been. By internalising these norms, they tend to become hidden to the eye of the observer, making it more difficult to distinguish culturally-laden scripts. The time frame 2014-2020, therefore, provides this thesis with a contemporary view on migration, identity and gender, and hence, the apparent cultural gender-based scripts. Here, too, the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to gather participants, especially because I was forced to return home after 10 days in Aruba.

Chapter 1: Identity, gender and migration theory

The intersectionality of gender and migration within structures of social life is an exhaustive field of research within academics and requires elaborate academic attention. This chapter aims to discuss the theoretical insights on the formation of cultural gender-based scripts with regards to identity, gender, intersectionality and migration. Firstly, this research will address theoretical insights on gender and identity. Secondly, it will discuss gender performativity and what this concept entails for cultural gender-based scripts. Thirdly, it will argue for intersectionality theory as an all-encompassing theoretical insight that supports the overlapping of multiple identities. Fourthly, it will discuss gender and identity in the context of migration and how these theories are configured into concrete ‘sets of rules’ that govern human behaviour, action and social practices, namely cultural gender-based scripts. Important influences to the theoretical insights of this chapter are gender theory, social constructivism, international migration theory and gender performativity. In reviewing this debate I will draw on scholars such as Foucault, Gramsci, Giddens and Schmitt and Wirth to provide a theoretical foundation on which this research is based.

1.1 Identity, gender and gender performativity: theoretical insights

Within academic debates on global patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, gender performativity and cultural gender-based scripts, it is suggested that gender and identity are unmistakably connected to power relations and hegemonic discourses. Hegemonic discourses in gender relations are – in turn - expressed through various concepts and theories; however, only a few are relevant and applicable to this research. The conceptualisation of gender is contested in the sense that it is a social construct that produces assumptions and expectations of how one ought to behave, which is subjected to social relations, cultural determinants and representations (Barker, 2012, p. 316). Moreover, the theoretical fields of social identity theory, gender theory and international migration theory suggest an interdependency between identity, gender and migration. The structure and agency debate serves as a foundation in this triadic notion, in that it sheds light on the historicity of power relations within these theories.

1.1.1. Structuration theory, agency and gender

Historically, the discussion of structure, agency and power within the social world has been well-recognised within social theory. In order to grasp the discourse by which gender is construed, the Foucauldian concept of discourse requires emphasis. As an anti-essentialist and poststructuralist thinker, Foucault argues that power is assigned through social relations and that power actively produces subjects (1980, p. 136). The existence of power, in this light, is subjected to social order and is formed *by* rather than *with* power relations. The relevance of this lies within where power originates; power is centralised through structures rather than alongside structures. Here, it is essential to acknowledge that Anthony Giddens, the founding father of structuration theory, argues that social life is organised due to structures within society (1979, p. 64), although he stresses the patterning of interaction and the continuity of interaction in time (1979, p. 62). In other words, structures that govern social life are present *through* interaction and *continue* over time. Structures are diffused, they are institutions, norms, values, and other influences that organise social life. Structuration theory, therefore, argues that structures are formed by

power relations through interaction and continues over time, as structures are rules and resources that reproduce social systems (Giddens, 1979, p. 64). In practical terms, this means that gender, for instance, is a structure, a set of rules that organises social life, which omits power and meaning.

A common critique of the Foucauldian discourse and Giddens' structuration theory, is the ontological claim of agency. Structuration theory argues that since structures are central in social life, social change is only possible through these structures. However, structuration theory positions the subject, the individual that is situated within the social system, as powerless. A critique to this notion is the concept of agency: "the individuals' capacity to initiate change" (Demmers, 2017, p. 16). The ontological position of agency argues that the power to initiate social change is what defines individuals in social interaction. Here, power is attributed to the individual to produce social change. Yet, if one's gendered identity is subjected to power relations, how does one determine their position within this discourse? Does one have the agency to determine their position within social relations? The influence of agency will be further discussed in chapter three. For now, it is essential to note that in his later work, Foucault recognises the path to self-determination and reflection and places agency on the actor in social relations with regards to sexuality and gender (1987, p. 5). Here we see that the formation of gender by power relations, through interaction and in continuum over time, are still deemed relevant. The difference is, however, that not only structures can exercise power over the practice and performance of gender. The Foucauldian discourse and Giddens' structuration theory provide a basis of how gender is understood, presented, performed and situated in daily life.

Continuing this path of reasoning on the association of gender and power, certain concepts become evident with regards to the historicity of gendered power relations. In an attempt to deepen the focus on the abstract individual as produced by Foucauldian theories of power and to reconfigure the pessimist character of existing gendered power relations, Hartsock notes that "domination, viewed from above, is more likely to appear as equality" (1990, p. 168). Here, Hartsock argues for patriarchal theories of power and emphasises the Foucauldian expression "wherever there is power, there is resistance" (1990, p. 168). In short, this means that although patriarchy has historically overshadowed gender equality, resistance to this unequal power distribution is evident. This dialectic notion of gender has been subjected to cultural influences, globalisation and human mobility. Furthermore, Giddens was the first to propose the duality of structure, in which structure and agency are two sides of the same coin and both complement and restrain each other (Demmers, 2017, p. 127). Gender is thus subjected to power relations, a constructed discourse that produces meaning that can be understood as simultaneously complementing and restraining social interaction.

As previously mentioned, patriarchal theories of power influenced the way gender is perceived in social interaction. Patriarchy, which is considered to maintain power relations with regard to the "male-headed family, mastery and superiority" (Barker, 2012, p. 209), is often discussed in terms of patriarchal societies, assuming that not every society is inherently patriarchal. According to Connell, the term global patriarchy entails a modernised view of patriarchy that represents the notion of wide-spread patriarchal domination present in all globalised economic systems (2011, p. 1376). By assuming that global patriarchy is present in all governable systems today, the distinction between patriarchal societies vanishes. This is essential within the context of identity and migration, as migration causes an individual to move between country-specific contexts which differ in cultural and gendered connotations. The concept of global patriarchy allows for all human migratory processes to be analysed from a gendered perspective, as the mutually exclusive country-specific gendered context is taken out of the equation. The local context on gender, however, did not become any less important. As discussed by international migration theorist Hondagneu-Sotelo, "it is gender operating at the family and community levels which shapes distinctively gendered patterns of migration" (2005, p. 9). It is essential to take into account the global structurationist perspective, as well as the more local, community-level processes of how gender is perceived, performed and pursued.

1.1.2. Social constructivism and the making of social identities

Gender is closely linked to processes of social identification, that is, identification through interaction with others. Patriarchy, for example, is a concept rooted in social identity in the sense that we ‘act out’ gender as opposed to ‘being’ a particular gender (Skjelsbaek, 2001, p. 224). Social constructivism sees gender as based on constructed social categories in which the connection with the individual and the social environment is central. Moreover, these categories are subjected to change. An individual consists of multiple identities which they actively perform in different contexts, some identities being more persistent than others (Demmers, 2017, p. 23). A difference between externally and internally ascribed identities may cause an identity conflict (Demmers, 2017, p. 23), which, in turn, can articulate itself in the social world. Here, too, we see that those who hold power determine and impose externally ascribed identities on individuals, causing identity conflicts on a personal level. In the system of global patriarchy, it is assumed that the male gender holds power to determine identity categories in which externally ascribed identities determine the rules, behaviour and expectations of gendered categories. Social structures, as mentioned above, are influenced by patriarchal ideas of how one gender is ought to behave. This dictates groups within groups of individuals. These groups have social boundaries, which can be permeable or impermeable in social interaction, in which out-group members are often deemed to be of lesser value than in-group members (Demmers, 2017, p. 46). A social identity is therefore subjected to power relations and global patriarchy.

To make this distinction between the in-group and the out-group even more extensive, solid group boundaries may generate tactics to enhance the in-group’s status. One example of these tactics is symbolic inversion (Skjelsbaek, 2001, p. 227). Symbolic inversion is an “attempt to recast the in-group’s ‘negative’ feature into ‘positive’ strong points” (Demmers, 2017, p. 47). There are various tactics to undertake to engage in symbolic inversion; however, one that has gathered evidence with regards to gender is ‘social dominance orientation’ (SDO) (Schmitt & Wirth, 2009, p. 430). As explained by Schmitt and Wirth, SDO employs self-stereotyping as a medium through which normalised gender roles and in-group reactions to patriarchy are formed, “as domination and inequality are more inconsistent with ways in which women might self-stereotype (e.g., as “nurturing”) than they are with how men might self-stereotype (e.g., as “independent” and “dominant”)” (2009, pp. 429-430). Here, stereotyping is highlighted as a “reduction of persons” (Barker, 2012, p. 316), meaning that individuals are stripped of their individualistic traits and grouped together in social categories. Self-stereotyping, therefore, takes away the power of others to stereotype individuals as they reclaim this agency to define themselves. Social dominance orientation can be seen as an attempt to recapture agency within structures, undermining the power relations present in social identity structures, and exemplifying active engagement in altering gender inequality.

In this sense, gender identity and power relations are unmistakably connected to hegemony and masculinity. Masculinity is seen as the ‘acting out’ of specific rules of behaviour of what is coined the male gender, or rather, a representation (Barker, 2012, p. 316). One concept that encapsulates this gendered power distribution in gender relations is hegemonic masculinity. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is derived from the Gramscian concept of hegemony, which relates to a balanced relationship between civil society and political society. The focus of this concept lies within “leadership’ or ‘direction’ (*direzione*) based on consent, and ‘domination’ (*dominazione*) based on coercion in the broadest sense” (Lawner, 1973, p. 235). Here, Giddens agrees with Gramsci in that domination is part of the structure and agency debate, meaning that some social actors have more power to define than others (Demmers, 2017, p. 129). Notable is that Gramsci centralises consent in his approach when discussing leadership and direction to ensure that “a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous

aims, are welded together with a single aim, as the basis of an equal and common conception of the world.” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 349). The issue of consent is crucial to understand gender relations since it is precisely the absence of consent that generates a gendered discourse. The consent necessary to establish hegemony in gender relations is absent as it is derived from the historical pre-conceived assumption that the male gender is dominant over the female gender. This term is nowadays coined as global patriarchy. Hegemonic masculinity explains how gendered discourses aimed at maintaining patriarchy are taken to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Cornell, 1995, p. 77). Hearn adds to this that hegemonic masculinity is suggested as a “configuration of gender practice” (2004, p. 55), thereby noting the effect it has on the instrumentality and performativity of gender. This gendered discourse takes a prominent role in migratory processes in that they determine normative assumptions of global patriarchy and, in doing so, determine gender roles for migrant men and women. More importantly, the domination of the male gender is what historically has determined gendered social identity norms.

1.1.3. Gender performativity theory

Hegemonic masculinity and social dominance orientation are examples of gender configuration practices that influence social identity. As previously mentioned, it is believed that individuals ‘act out’ or perform gender, instead of taking gendered categories as fixed entities. Furthermore, Bohan mentions that the conceptualisation of gender relations happens through “transactions that are understood to be appropriate to one sex” (1997, p. 33). Which transactions of social interaction are particularly appropriate to one gender is determined by society and its underlying cultural and gender norms. Above all, per social identity theory, these transactions are subject to change. One field of study that is mainly involved with the causal relationship between gender roles and social actions appropriate to specific genders, is gender performativity theory.

The idea of the performativity of gender was first introduced by poststructuralist feminist Judith Butler (2004), who states that society sees gender as a result of how it is performed and that society determines what the norm is through this practice (p. 218). By performing, she means that actions take place in social interaction which ‘undo’ and change the image of the gender that person represents (Butler, 2004, p. 1). Here, it is important to introduce a contemporary critique on these gender identities. The field of anti-essentialist theory implies that “femininity and masculinity are not essential universal categories but discursive constructions” (Barker, 2012, p. 24). Moreover, poststructuralist feminism adds that the analysis of the “cultural construction of subjectivity per se and with a range of possible masculinities and femininities” are what enables society to diverge from traditional ideas of gender (ibid.). It should be noted that this research focuses on the conceptualisations of gender-related concepts and for the remainder of this research, it will continue to do so. It does not aim to define or specify how femininity and masculinity take shape, since it is a construction and not a determined perception. Instead, it will focus on how masculinity and femininity are constructed in the context of Venezuelan society.

Butler adds that by the act of performing gender, predominant and non-normative gender-roles are established (2004, p. 209). To refer back to the structure versus agency debate, the power to define gender norms is now placed in the individual. Here, Butler agrees with constructivism, for the fact that normalisation is subjected to contemporary politics just as the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity and gender roles are fluid and vary over time. What is essential in gender performativity theory is the influence it has on structures and agency. Gender performativity places agency at the individual to actively transform gender roles, whereas it too recognises the structure in which gender is performed. In this light, all actions performed by a particular gender can produce social change, as gender is a social category subjected to change. However, this change is restrained by social structures of society. Here, the duality of structure is evident.

1.1.4. Intersectionality theory

Social constructivist theory and gender theory both account for identity to be constructed through societal norms and values in order to belong to the so-called in-group. What the in-group is, however, is not a question of singular factors. Here, the theory regarding intersectionality is employed to explain the layered identities of female Venezuelan migrants and the negative consequences that come with these layered identities, such as discrimination.

The term ‘intersectionality’ was introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, underlying the importance of restructuring theories on discrimination to include the discrimination on the basis of race and gender, amongst other social identifiers such as class and sexuality. The intersection of these forms of structural violence denotes the antiracist and feminist singular focus on discrimination on the basis of race or gender as “mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). Instead, it offered an inclusive theory to rethink antidiscrimination law, feminist theory and antiracist policies. Crenshaw exemplifies that race constructs a shared identity and, inherently, constructs a shared perception of group targeting. Intergroup differences vanish in social interaction and the social world is categorized. Moreover, the additional identifiers of gender overlap this initial perception and add another dimension to the targeting of individuals (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 161). Intersectionality theory offers what this research argues is a deepening of social constructivist theory. It views the multitude of social identities in comparison to the different types of oppression these identities face. As discussed by Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, the theoretical grounds of intersectionality theory lies within anti-discrimination theory and social movement politics; both pointed towards identity politics and social justice (2013, p. 787). However, in identity politics, the dynamics between groups are central, whereas intragroup differences often remain outside of the theoretical scope (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). Moreover, with regards to violence against women, these intragroup differences often dictate the targeted social group, a process which is essential in intersectionality theory (ibid.). Intersectionality thus highlights the importance of different identifiers within the in-group and how they interact, and more importantly, how they connect and henceforth facilitate intensified oppression.

Intersectionality theory, too, is connected to power. More importantly, the power to define. As discussed, in global patriarchy, the male gender often holds power to define. In a cultural context, this power is ascribed by cultural gender-based scripts. However, historical and political context can redefine these power relations. The dominant group in migration processes determines these power relations and more often than not, the host society holds this power. Venezuelan migrant women in Aruba become unable to redefine themselves in the context of migration when parts of their intersectional identity become reified. Therefore, intersectionality sheds light on the different pieces of identity one can possess, in which processes of reification can take away the ability to define one’s own identity. Simultaneously, it argues the multiple layers of oppression that are evident with each identifier.

By weighing these theoretical insights, it is determined that gender norms are produced and reinforced through migration from and to societies embedded in structures of human behaviour. Concepts such as discourse, hegemony, global patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity draw up these structures and explain how the domination of the male gender governs society. Identities that are formed under the influence of these concepts often internalise gendered discourses and intersectional identities are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination. Following these theories, it becomes imminent that society determines a predetermined role assigned to each gender, a certain ‘script’ to follow in social interaction, which continues to be present in processes of migration. This script is then actively performed through gender performativity, within structures and agency.

2.2 Gender, identity and migration: cultural gender-based scripts

As mentioned, the perception of the female gender as subordinate stems from determining gender roles in patriarchal societies. With global patriarchy, these gendered social identity norms are subjected to male dominance. However, gendered social identity norms differ amongst each other. This research argues that these differences lie within the cultural norms of societies, as these norms produce scripts of behaviour. Although definitions of gender scripts and cultural scripts are discussed in various academic fields, it is evident that the dynamics of gender-based scripts, situated in processes of acculturation and migration, is a lesser discussed phenomenon. Migrants in host countries shift to and from different gendered social identity norms to adapt to new societies. The definition of these scripts is constructed through a combination of various concepts rooted in the fields of psychology and sociology. Both fields express valuable contributions to the study of unequal gender relations but fail to account for a comprehensive analysis of all influential aspects that are involved in processes of migration. With the aim of filling the literary gap of how cultural gender-based scripts are produced and reinforced in society, the following analysis of gender, culture and behavioural scripts is made.

2.2.1. *Gender and cultural scripts*

Firstly, the conceptualisation of gender will be touched upon. In their study on gender role development amongst young children, psychologists Levy and Fivush recognise scripts as generalised schemes of conditions that pertain to a certain event (1993, p. 129). Within the definition of schemes of conditions, the sanctioning of divergence from these scripts is essential. In addition, they mention gender schemas, referring to “which sex stereotypically performs a given sequence of events” (1993, p. 133). Gendered schemas of behaviour consist of how one is ought to perform gender in a particular place, during a certain event or within a social structure. As discussed above, it is Butler who first suggested the term of ‘gender performativity’ as modes of behaviour pertaining to each gender and that are governed by society (2004, p. 18). Thus, through the practice of performing gender, society adheres to scripts that are employed during particular events that govern stereotypically gendered behaviour. Here, gendered behaviour is understood as what society believes and determines as behaviour employable by one gender and, presumably, not the other (Srivastava, 2017, p. 790). Consequentially, gendered scripts are rooted in structures, as the institutionalisation of norms and values within structures of society dictate rules of behaviour. This institutionalisation happens through discursive practices and social processes that can take place within state institutions, religious sites and even at the local next-door barbeque.

Secondly, society inherently imposes other restrictions on our behaviour that polices the way individuals act in the public domain. Cultural norms, simultaneously performed in the context of social interaction express scripts as well. Organisational psychologist Geert Hofstede (1983) argues that gender relations are rooted in culture, as he states that “boys are socialised toward assertiveness and self-reliance, and girls, toward nurturance and responsibility” (1983, p. 55). The difference in the cultural roles ascribed to each gender differs from one context to the other and is subjected to contemporary gender dynamics. Furthermore, according to psychologists Fennes and Hapgood, there are different levels of culture that are performed consciously and unconsciously, which they illustrate by means of an iceberg (1997, p. 17) as shown in Figure 1. Whereas some rules and customs that are embedded in culture are apparent, others, such as traditions and routine behaviours, are hidden. Especially in times of migration, cultural differences become apparent. One process that can be mentioned here to assimilate to cultural context is acculturation. According to cultural studies, identities are inherently cultural and the sharing of social materials to form an identity is a process of acculturation (Barker, 2012, p. 222). The iceberg in Figure 1 demonstrates which part of a culture is subjected to internalisation and which part requires an innate understanding.

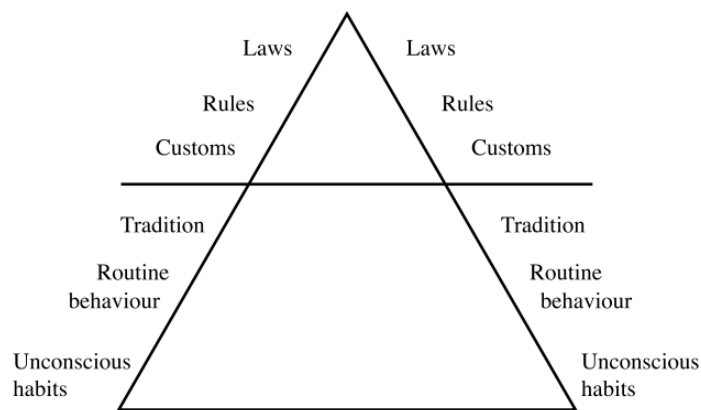


Figure 1: A redefined iceberg of culture (Fennes and Hapgood 1997, 17).

The important distinction to take from this addition is that gender-based scripts and culture-based scripts both rely on institutionalised, society-wide norms that generate unconscious or routine behaviour. It is suggested that laws, rules and customs are cultural identifiers that can be ‘acculturated’ to, whereas traditions, routine behaviour and unconscious habits require a more profound understanding beyond acculturation. This brings methodological implications in research, as the observer might not uncover unconscious habits. One method mentioned above to analyse unconscious or routine behaviour in society is by viewing it through the lens of structuralism, which tends to elucidate human action through the development within a social structure (Demmers, 2017, p. 16). In addition, sociologist Margaret Archer argues that within structuralism, culture is seen as organisations, roles, institutions, systems (1996, p. 1) and is thus what best expresses society’s view on gender practices. Referring back to the structure versus agency debate, culture is both influenced by the individualist performance of culturally significant action, as well by it being a structure in itself that enables such a performance.

In comparison to gender scripts, we find an overlap in behaviour, as both cultural and gender scripts pertain to one’s social behaviour within society. As “culture enables interpretations of social life and thus provides orientation for action and behaviour” (Allan, 2003, p. 94), culture dictates social interaction. However, Archer states that since culture is rooted in systems and is thus the norm, it generates an aversion towards differentiation from this standard (1996, p. 19). A deviation from the cultural norm is obstructed by society itself, to facilitate impermeable group boundaries pertaining to cultural division. Here, this research circles back to social constructivism and group boundaries. For most, group boundaries are necessary in social life to make sense of in-groups and out-groups that shape society (Demmers, 2017, p. 39). Likewise, individuals employ the practice of groupism in order to use groups as fundamental constituents of social life (Brubaker, 2004, p. 35).

It is thus argued that cultural groups are maintained by not deviating from the societal norm, a practice that is necessary to preserve social group boundaries. More overlap is found with gender scripts in which deviation from normality is sanctioned. Gendered scripts, as well as cultural scripts, seem equally influential when it comes to the formation of identity and identity performance. The influence of intersectional identities play into this dynamic: gendered and cultural norms may differ, upon which identities become intersectional. It is because of this that the suggested definition of cultural gender-based scripts entails that they are ‘accounts of stereotypical behaviour, conform to gender- and cultural norms of a given society, that are resistant towards deviation from normality’. Through forming these cultural gender-based scripts, it is assured that deviation is minimal and can be easily noticed, and consequently, sanctioned.

2.2.2. Cultural gender-based scripts in migration

By combining the psychological terms of ‘scripts’ (Levy & Fivush, 1993, p. 129), ‘gender scripts’ (p. 133) and ‘gender performativity’ (Butler, 2004, p. i), it can be stated that through the practice of performing gender, society adheres to specific scripts. These scripts are employed during certain events that govern stereotypically gendered behaviour. In times of migration, these scripts are subjected to different cultural and gender norms in the host country. As stated before, these scripts are resistant towards deviation from normality, which means that individuals have to shift between behavioural scripts to fit the ‘new normality’ in the host country.

Within the field of international migration theory, authors such as Nawyn argue that these roles based on gender and culture either change to match the different gender dynamics in host countries (2010, p. 755). Other authors such as Cockburn argue that these roles are reinforced to satisfy the migrants’ need to return to normality (1998, p. 206). Although the influence of global patriarchy dictates that all societies are inherently patriarchal, Nawyn argues that the exchange of cultural norms in migration produces new sets of cultural norms that are influenced by the normativity of gender and sexuality (2010, p. 756). In other words, do migrants stick to the cultural gender-based scripts that they are accustomed to in their home country or do they actively pursue other cultural gender-based scripts to assimilate to the host society? Here, an example is given by Paul (2015), who mentions that among female Filipino migrant domestic workers, gender is actively used as a tool to justify extending the traditional role of taking care of the family into the labour domain (p. 271). The traditional gender roles can, therefore, be altered according to individual necessities or country-specific dynamics. However, gender roles are social, which means that altering traditional gender roles does not have to be positively acknowledged by the whole of society. The question that arises is, do social structures in migration enable altering these cultural gender-based scripts, or do they reinforce these scripts?

The motivation for changing the performance of one cultural gender-based script to the other, in order to match the host-country dynamics, is not always a process that the individual has influence on. Migration is a process in which identity is actively subjected to change. Whereas an individual can be a successful entrepreneur in their home country, the process of migration can label them as a refugee in a host country. As discussed before, this process of labelling and identity formation is bounded by gender roles, cultural norms and values. After all, what oppresses in one cultural context, can be a privilege in the other (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008, p. 6). Especially in migration, this saying holds intrinsic value. One concept that encapsulates this obstruction to identity alteration is reification. The process of reification generates what Samuels and Ross-Sheriff call a pluralistic unity (2008, p. 8). A pluralistic unity in this sense is an internally diverse, yet unified social category. According to social constructivism, this entails differences within in-groups. Reification is the process of turning a fluid part of an identity and making it solid, that is, unchangeable (Demmers, 2017, p. 29). Reification is a process that takes place especially during migration, where identity is even more fluid and the sense of self is challenged by host-country dynamics. Here, identifiers such as class, gender, race and ethnicity become solid and unchangeable in social interaction. Venezuelan migrant women in Aruba might become unable to redefine themselves in the context of migration when parts of their identity become reified. Likewise, the principle of social categorisation acknowledges this process, as people categorise others to make sense of the social world (Brewer, 2001, p. 19). Thus, social categorisation and reification make that individuals might not possess the agency to employ different cultural gender-based scripts.

On the other hand, reinforcing a certain gender-based script to return to normality generally includes maintaining original group boundaries and social identities from before the migration process. Examples are pertaining to your social group, that is, other Venezuelans that have migrated to Aruba, or continuing your role within the family as a stay-at-home-mother. Here, the aforementioned concept of acculturation helps us understand that international migration is a process based on shared social

material in which the individual has agency to conform to different cultural context. How much agency, however, is often determined by the host country. A host society might impose their norms and values, or reified assumptions on the migrant's cultural gender-based script, in which migrants are unable to switch between scripts. Their longing for normality might play into this: continuing their role as traditional housewife keeps Venezuelan women behind closed doors. Therefore, the way in which Venezuelan women are perceived by Aruban society might make these cultural gender-based scripts inescapable for some, where the very act of migration might invite others to redefine their social identity.

The terms and conditions of migration are essential to understand migration to a host country. The migration process can be an individual or a case of household migration. In the latter, migrations more often tend to be permanent, which necessitates assimilation and adaptation of local cultural practices (Briody, 1987, p. 44). For example, in a study on household migration from Mexico to Southern Texas, Briody mentions that ideological structures of gender dominate assumptions on labour force inclusion, in which women are not expected to work 'because it is a Mexican custom' (Briody, 1987, p. 41). Nevertheless, after migration, the necessity for income in order to survive in the host country influences these assumptions. Host countries are generally more expensive to migrants, product availability is limited, and therefore require monetary resources. As a result, women actively partake in the labour force, out of necessity. As Briody suggests, the relaxation of the gendered ideology that women are not supposed to work changes the local labour force dynamics (Briody, 1987, p. 42). This understanding is essential when it comes to the analysis of employment, gender and migration.

Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo is an international migration theorist who argues that migrants are active participants within the migratory process (1994, p. 6). Here, women are able to employ their perceived characteristics to facilitate migration. A more agency-centred approach, therefore, suggests that women tend to adapt to the local host country dynamics out of necessity. Examples of this adaptation are altering the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* and extend it into the labour spheres, hence actively employing the assigned cultural gender-based script to benefit from it. This, however, might generate a longing to return to normality within processes of identification, or in social constructivist terminology, an identity conflict. As will be discussed in chapter two, there are multiple gender-based scripts that govern women's behaviour within the Venezuelan context, and thus a shift towards the performance of other gender-based scripts are possible. Nevertheless, cultural gender-based scripts are naturally resistant towards deviation, meaning that the alteration of one script can have repercussions in the social spheres. These repercussions, or implications, will be discussed more extensively in chapter three. Extending a particular script into the labour spheres might alter the fundamental rules of behaviour of that particular script, hence generating an alternative reaction from society to the performance of altered cultural gender-based scripts.

2.2.3. Human trafficking and exploitation

Up until here, this research has assumed that migrants move with determined reasons out of their own motivation. Nevertheless, a large share of migrants do not fit within this description. Human trafficking and practices of labour and sexual exploitation generate alternative paths of migration, in which security and safety are often disregarded. Human trafficking is the "acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). Here, exploitation refers in the most minimal sense to sexual exploitation, involuntary labour, enslavement and serfdom (Lackzo & Gramegna, 2003, p. 180). A common misconception lies within the differentiation of human trafficking from smuggling. Smuggling happens in exchange for payment for the smuggler, whereas human trafficking simultaneously requires payment in the form of exploitation after the smuggling process (Fergus, 2005, p. 3). As this research will focus on host-country

dynamics and how migrants adapt to the host culture, the concept of smuggling will not be further highlighted.

The exploitation of labour is a violation of human rights. It is regularly paired with international criminality; it harms the victim and violates domestic as well as international legislation. As mentioned by Dowling, Moreton and Wrigt, labour exploitation contains three core elements: “the movement or harbouring of a person; use of deception or coercion; and placement into situations of exploitation” (2007, p. 2). As will be discussed in chapter three, this is common in Aruba when it comes to men working in construction. Sexual exploitation carries a different definition, however, the two definitions are often seen in combination with one another. Fergus notes here that human trafficking always carries high risks of sexual abuse since victims are kept in isolation and perpetrators enjoy an environment of impunity (Fergus, 2005, p. 2). The term sexual exploitations brings important implications for research on this topic. Human trafficking, and with that, sexual exploitation, is seen as an issue dominated by gender relations, where women are more prone to being trafficked (Danailova-Trainor & Laczko, 2010, p. 63). However, Feingold argues that studies on human trafficking often wrongly exclude men and boys, due to the predominant theme of sex trafficked females (2005, p. 26). Although the exploitation of male migrants is less common, it still holds intrinsic importance to recognize male trafficking in international human trafficking processes. One of the reasons why research is mainly focused on the trafficking of women and girls, is because female migrants are conceptualised due to the “generalised notion of female vulnerability” (Surtees, 2008, p. 17). This includes that female migrants are disproportionately pursued as trafficked and male migrants are pursued as irregular migrants (Surtees, 2008, p. 17). It is precisely these gendered notions that are central in the performance of cultural gender-based scripts in Aruba: female Venezuelan migrants that fall victim to sexual exploitation due to the gendered notion of vulnerability and submissiveness.

Considering the broader scholarly debate of motivations, processes and the perpetrator-victim debate of human trafficking, labour exploitation and sexual exploitation, it is crucial to direct this discussion towards the gendered problematics that circle the Venezuelan migration crisis. As discussed by John, the current human trafficking of Venezuelans in the Caribbean area is primarily focused on sex tourism, which includes forced prostitution and exploitation of young women and girls (John, 2019, p. 442). The United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report for Aruba underlines this notion and adds that in Aruba, “traffickers exploit Venezuelan women in sex trafficking” and “women in regulated and unregulated prostitution [...] are most vulnerable to trafficking” (2019). Therefore, the issue of human trafficking of female Venezuelan migrants and the risk of forced prostitution is empirically evident in Aruba. As discussed above, the gendered pretence of these problematics is rooted in cultural gender-based scripts, as women are often perceived as submissive and thus fall victim to human trafficking and forced prostitution.

In sum, this chapter has explored the dimensions of identity formation, gender performativity and cultural gender-based scripts. It discussed the structure/agency debate and highlighted how this debate entails a duality of structure: structure and agency both enable and restrain each other. For gender, this means that gender is both situated within structures, yet it includes agency to perform gender. Next, it was argued that social constructivism sees gender as a constructed entity, subjected to internally and externally ascribed identities and social boundaries. This chapter then aimed to sketch the gendered dynamics in which these social identification processes take place: processes such as social domination orientation, combined with notions of hegemonic masculinity, global patriarchy and stereotyping, make for a normalised, globalised notion of male dominance and female subordination. Moreover, these notions of male dominance and female subordination come with predetermined rules of behaviour or ‘scripts’ to employ in social interaction. These scripts are closely linked to the performativity of gender and are heavily influenced by gender norms and cultural meaning. Here, it was discussed which cultural

factors are apparent and which are hidden, and how this influences processes of acculturation and the alteration of certain cultural gender-based scripts. The discussion section will highlight this dynamic more in depth. Lastly, these cultural gender-based scripts were positioned within the context of international migration theory, that is, migrants shift between behavioural scripts to fit the host country dynamics. However, processes such as reification obstruct the alteration of these scripts, as solid group boundaries are established and the deviation from normality is sanctioned. In chapter three, this research will take examples from the conducted interviews to discuss the return to normality or the alteration of traditional gender roles in the context of Venezuelan migration to Aruba. For now, it will introduce the country-specific context of cultural gender-based scripts in Venezuela in chapter two.

Chapter 2: Politics of gender in Venezuela

Cultural gender-based scripts are influenced by culture, gender roles and identity. The identities that shape these scripts are often layered: one migrant can be male, a father and of African descent. What these layers mean, how these layers interact with each other and how they are negotiated in social interaction, is explained by intersectionality theory. In order to understand intersectionality and the contrasting images of beauty that Venezuelan women in Aruba are facing, it is essential to look at intersectionality in dialogue with culture. Acculturation and assimilation are two concepts that encapsulate the efforts of Venezuelan women in Aruba; however, they require an adequate understanding of the cultural attributes that migrants stem from. This chapter aims to understand the performance of cultural gender-based scripts by Venezuelan women and how this is understood through the theory of intersectionality. It will explain the relevance of different Venezuelan cultural gender-based scripts and what they entail within Venezuelan culture. Here, it will become clear where women learn to conform to a certain image that fits the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*.

One of the most wide-spread and most known parts of shared cultural material is produced, negotiated and subjected to popular culture. Popular culture includes “mass-produced culture of the culture industries” (Barker, 2012, p. 52) and is often regarded to be in the hands of the transnational capitalist corporations. Because of the democratic socialist political system that has been introduced by Hugo Chávez since 1999, the inward-oriented economy and politics diminished the influence of transnational capitalist corporations on national culture, arguably creating space for the domestic production of Venezuelan popular culture. The term ‘popular culture’ includes all produced materials, meanings and images, stemming mostly from the media. It involves expression of identity, identity performativity and it generates identifiers itself. It also functions to explain the punishment of deviation from these popular beliefs, such as discrimination and violence. Individuals tend to follow popular culture to remain within the societal in-group. In the following paragraphs, the cultural phenomena of beauty pageants in Venezuela will be explained as systems that reproduce meaning about cultural gender-based scripts. Furthermore, their cultural significance, their meaning in a *machismo* and *marianismo* culture and their function for the formation of national identity will be explained.

2.1. *Machismo, marianismo* and sexual identities

Historically, Venezuela’s popular culture has revolved, and still revolves, around an ideal image of female beauty. One important yet contemporary expression of this are beauty pageants. National beauty pageants are thought of to control the gendered narrative within traditional gender roles in Venezuela. They are rooted in the *machismo/marianismo*-complex, a dialectic notion based on perceived gendered characteristics, which will be further discussed in this chapter. Although this research argues that *marianismo* is a cultural gender-based script that establishes a dominant narrative within Venezuelan culture and is connected to sexual identity, it is not the only gendered narrative that prevails in social interaction. Other intersectional female cultural gender-based scripts such as that of the *Chavista*, the moral matriarch and the neoliberal businesswoman exist alongside of the *marianismo*-script. These scripts will be elaborated upon in this chapter.

2.1.1. Venezuelan beauty pageants and sexual identities

The first official beauty pageant in Venezuela was held in 1905 when a cigar manufacturer enticed customers to vote for the most beautiful women that were displayed on signs in tobacco shops. As discussed by Nichols, this voting contest laid the foundation for a robust and secure connection between beauty, success, winning and determined that those in power “set and enforce beauty norms” (Nichols, 2016, p. 122). It should be noted that in this era, those in power who determined beauty standards, were typically of the male gender. This 20th-century voting contest soon turned out to become an all-encompassing national beauty industry that focusses explicitly on women. In an article written for the BBC on Venezuelan schools specialised in child beauty queens, Grainger compares the beauty pageants to sports events in most other parts of the world (2012). Children as young as four are enrolled in beauty schools to learn how to walk elegantly, talk intelligently and most of all, appear beautiful and well-mannered in the hope of being able to participate in the Miss Venezuela beauty pageants. In Venezuela, being a popular pageant queen ensures one of wealth, a high social status and success (Grainger, 2012). It should be noted here that alternative compositions of beauty pageants exists as well, such as male beauty pageants, transsexual beauty pageants and child beauty pageants. The majority of popular culture, however, exemplifies that female beauty pageants are most significant in establishing a beauty standard.

These beauty pageants serve multiple functions, both intended and unintended. One of these functions is establishing a national beauty image, thereby controlling the national, gendered narrative. It is essential to acknowledge that the beauty pageants’ popularity in Venezuela is rooted in *machismo* and *marianismo*. *Machismo* is the extension and expression of masculinity throughout society in which the male gender is regarded to hold the primary social status. As argued by Torres, Solberg Carlstrom, this Latin American social practice associates the male gender with perceived characteristics of hypermasculinity such as taking control, achieving status and being tough (2002, p. 163), which as a result, are often overly expressed. Above all, being sensitive is not part of these masculine characteristics. The mental connection between having emotions and expressing feelings of affection is often attributed to the female, being the caring, loving mother.

In Venezuela, the cultural significance of *marianismo*, the female counterpart of *machismo*, takes up a much more prominent role in the performativity of gender. *Marianismo* is a Latin American phenomenon that determines female gender roles; it takes its origin from Catholicism. As discussed by Hussain, Leija, Lewis and Sanchez, in *marianismo*, traditional female gender roles are conformed to the virtues of Virgin Mary, or *Maria*, being a caring mother, self-sacrificing, passive and possessing a moral sexuality (2015, p. 74). *Marianismo* is positively perceived in the sense that it embodies a moral, just woman, whereas its negative features such as passivity and submissiveness are more prominently perceived by outsiders. It can almost be seen as an ideology in which women are expected to have multiple roles: a caring mother, a loving wife and a moral sexual partner. What is interesting in this *marianismo/machismo* complex, is that although the male gender is regarded as dominant, the female gender is regarded as morally superior (Hussain, et al., 2015, p. 75). *Marianismo* is thus not seen as a result of *machismo*, it is rather a complementary concept to the male role in Latin American culture.

What is important here is the difference between gender and sexual identity. One’s gender identity “reflects a deeply felt and experienced sense of one’s gender” (Healey, 2014, p. 3). It is followed by one’s social sex-role and sexual orientation, which eventually comprises to a sexual identity (Hussain, et al., 2015, p. 76). A sexual identity is thus defined by the individual itself, although it is subjected to societal phenomena such as *marianismo* and *machismo*. As mentioned in chapter one, social dominance orientation is a tactic of symbolic inversion, and entails a process of self-identification in order to redefine one’s identity and focus on their perceived strong points. *Marianismo* is, therefore, of influence to this process and is thought of to generate traditional gender roles in female Latin American identities. As a result, female sexual identities are subjected to traditional gender roles and are deemed submissive,

whereas male sexual identities are deemed dominant and powerful. Here, this research argues that the *machismo/marianismo* complex heavily involves the sexualisation of women, if not the hyper sexualisation of Venezuelan women. Specific illustrations for this assumption are found in the in-depth interviews with female Venezuelan irregular migrants in Aruba, which will be more thoroughly discussed in chapter three. In order to understand these illustrations, the following paragraphs will elaborate more upon the hypersexualisation of Venezuelan women in popular culture, such as beauty pageants.

2.1.2. *Miss Venezuela and the national beauty image*

Another contemporary function of the Venezuelan beauty pageants is exerting the national beauty standard in internal processes of identification, or rather, the way people perceive themselves. Journalism and other forms of writing that generate popular culture are central when it comes to maintaining the focus on Venezuelan beauty standards. For example, in an article written about the ‘Miss Venezuela’ pageant, ‘new perfect measures’ were announced: a weight of 78 kilograms, a height of 1.68 meter and with measurement of 99-63-91 (Brechi, 2015). There has been much discussion on the blatant sexism, the hyper sexualisation and the extreme focus on bodily measurements in the beauty pageants, all of which are specifically directed towards women. A clear example of this are the measurements of participating contestants. In an article written about the 2018 ‘Miss Venezuela’ pageant, it was mentioned that although all contestants were aged between 18 and 25, and all of their heights were between 170 and 180 cm, none of them possessed ‘*las medidas perfectas*’. The phrase ‘the perfect measurements’ is a common saying in Venezuela to describe the beauty standard and overall popular image of how women should present themselves. These perfect measurements are comprised of a 90 cm bust, a 60 cm waist and a 90cm hip-width (France-Presse, 2019).

After receiving international critique, an official statement by the general manager of the pageant announced that the premise of the ‘perfect international measures’ on which the contestants were judged, no longer applied to the evaluation (EFE, 2018). However, the image of these ideal measurements has already been internalised amongst young Venezuelan women. By seeing and hearing about the perfect measurements, these ideals are internalised and brought into the process of social identification. As discussed, an identity is constructed, and these bodily ideals are just another part of the puzzle. During interviews with two young Venezuelan women, these measurements, or ‘*las medidas*’, were discussed. The interviewees mentioned that these measurements dominate the beauty industry in Venezuela, in which more often than not, women go on extensive diets and take extreme measures to adhere to the beauty ideal.¹ These participants jokingly mentioned that the only reason that they didn’t undergo plastic surgery is because they don’t have the money.² Moreover, participation in beauty pageants in Venezuela creates collective identities (Nichols, 2016, p. 125). The phrase ‘Venezuelan women’ is often associated with perfection, beauty and elegant mannerisms.

What has become evident through interviews, is that these connotations have merged with the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*. It is not only the role of the mother that women need to actively participate in, they are simultaneously expected to pay a significant amount of attention, money and effort to their appearance. In an interview with a Venezuelan man, it was mentioned that these expectations cause some women to spend their money on beauty products and services, instead of much-needed nutrition for their children.³

¹ Author’s interview with participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020.

² Author’s interview with participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020.

³ Author’s interview with participant fifteen on May 1st, 2020, via videocall.

The majority of the interviewed Venezuelan migrant women in Aruba acknowledged these beauty ideals, and actively connected this connotation to Venezuelan women that make use of this image and illegally work in prostitution. This beauty image and sexualisation of Venezuelan women thus carries a certain functionality, it can be employed in times of need. This will be further discussed in chapter three.

2.1.3. Colonialism and intersectionality

Next to the purpose of establishing a national beauty image and controlling the internalisation of this image, controlling beauty standards amongst Venezuelan women serves another function. It simultaneously sets the stage for the creation of a perfect national image of race, class and femininity (Nichols, 2013, p. 172). The pressure this puts on young women in Venezuela to conform to the idealised image is easily dismissed in the eyes of nationalists. The necessity for this perfect national image stems from colonialism, during which Venezuelans classified themselves as ‘café con leche’. The comparison between the colour of coffee and skin-colour stems from the colonial period of slavery, coffee fields and racial mixing. The 2800 km-long coastline of Venezuela served as a welcoming mat for Spanish colonisers to enter Venezuela in 1522, enslave the indigenous population and absorb them into the *encomienda*-system (Nichols, 2013, p. 173). In the early 1600s, African slaves were brought to Venezuela to support the cacao production. At that time, white overseers preferred to live in the urban areas, and African slaves, indigenous slaves and free people of colour lived in the rural areas. They frequently engaged in interracial relationships, marriage and other social interactions, with limited white contact. The geographical distance between the white overseers and the racially different population that lived in the rural areas often made for a distinction between the civilised inhabitants of the urban and the so-called barbaric population of the rural. This connotation, which was produced in association with skin-colour, continued after the Spanish colonisation, even though around 70% of the Venezuelan population was able to identify as mixed-race in the 1950s (Nichols, 2013, p. 174). As a product of this association, the lower economic classes were seen as dirty and lazy; “all characteristics associated with darker skin” (Nichols, 2016, p. 128). Nowadays, this connotation still imposes its effect on popular culture. Winners of the Miss Venezuela beauty pageant are often of a lighter skin colour; however, to say that this is directly connected to the Spanish colonisation is too narrow-sighted. It does illustrate how skin colour and beauty is perceived in modern-day Venezuela. This representation of the public image, in combination with overlapping identities connected to the perception of class, ethnicity and gender, is a classroom example of intersectionality. Intersectionality thus helps us understand that identifiers can overlap and generate discrimination, even more so than with identities that do not overlap.

2.2. Other cultural gender-based scripts: Chavistas, the moral matriarch, the businesswoman

As discussed above, Venezuelan women learn how to behave and look like from popular culture. Popular culture dictates the gender-based scripts, in which the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* is crucial. These ‘images of women’ take their origin from Diana Meehan’s *Ladies of the Evening* (1983), a study on the representation of women in television shows. Multiple categories of womanhood were distinguished into stereotyped images of how women are ought to behave, such as “the good wife, [...] the bitch, [...] and the matriarch [...]” (Barker, 2012, p. 317). In matching these categories with specific character traits during an qualitative interpretation of popular culture, Meehan found that submissive, sensitive and domesticated women were deemed ‘good’, whereas rebellious, independent and selfish women were deemed ‘bad’ (Barker, 2012, p. 317). It is this specific form of attributing a connotation towards the behaviour of women that form scripts in which deviant behaviour

is considered a negative trait. Nevertheless, the study of images of women in popular culture has received flagrant epistemological critiques, in the sense that these categories reduce women's identities to a singular, negative meaning (Barker, 2012, p. 319). Although it is by no means the objective of this research to categorise female behaviour into solid scripts, thinking along these lines brings valuable insights to how identity categories are perceived by society. By assuming that specific character traits belong to certain cultural gender-based scripts, these scripts become reified and, thus, observable. Intersectionality theory, here, brings an essential insight as to how these scripts are perceived and how they generate meaning. Yet, *marianismo* is not the only cultural gender-based script that dictates social interaction for female Venezuelans. It is, however, the cultural gender-based script that holds the most information on intersectional identities. As will be discussed, other cultural gender-based scripts possess information on the behaviour of Venezuelan women, yet are less challenged with regards to religion and sexuality. Next to many others, some cultural gender-based scripts that can be identified are that of the moral matriarch, the successful neo-liberal businesswoman and the Chavista.

2.2.1 *The cultural gender-based script of the Chavista*

The cultural gender-based scripts of Chavista finds its origin in Chávez's populism and his Bolivarian Revolution, in which women were a "significant source of political support" and simultaneously, "the poorest of the poor" (Espina & Rakowski, 2010, p. 193). Chavez' political speeches aimed at women were especially influential for 'barrio women': women who were involved in grassroots community activism in the more impoverished areas of Venezuela (Fernandez, 2007, p. 102). Here, intersectionality explains how this double 'burden', being female and being poor, results in a specific targeting by political interests to mobilise, conform and instrumentalise women for political gains (Espina & Rakowski, 2010, p. 193). Moreover, the emphasis on women to be revolutionary mothers made women feel recognized and that their efforts were essential to ensure stability (ibid., 194). The politically influenced cultural gender-based script of Chavista, therefore, generates a different understanding of social interaction in which the female identity is politicised. The politicisation of women brings power to these scripts, however, is essentially instrumentalised for political gain.

2.2.2. *The cultural gender-based script of the moral matriarch*

Another cultural gender-based script specifically tailored to women is that of the moral matriarch. Meehan's analysis of images of woman in popular culture describes the 1980's view of women as mothers: "authority of family role, older, desexed" (Barker, 2012, p. 317). The concept of matricentrism dominates most of Venezuela's underprivileged families in which the mother is the central figure of the family, and the father figure is considered peripheral and thus dispensable (Platone, 1998, p. 170). In an interview with a 43-year old Venezuelan father, this point was illustrated. The interviewee discussed the family composition in Venezuela. He estimated that around 70% of the populations' families are composed of only mothers with children.⁴ During the interview, it became clear that the contemporary role of men as fathers is not acknowledged in Venezuelan society. The interviewee mentioned that although Mothers' Day is celebrated extensively in primary schools all over the country, Fathers' Day is not.⁵ When asked about this difference, the subject of *machismo* ascended.

⁴ Author's interview with participant fifteen on May 1st, 2020, via videocall.

⁵ Ibid.

The prevailing *machismo* culture of Venezuela thus imposes its effects on behaviour of men in private and public spheres. The cultural gender-based script of the moral matriarch differs from the *machismo* culture in that it places mothers as the central figure in social life instead of men. One primary example of this is the Guajiro, one of the largest ethnic minority groups in Venezuela, who are especially matrilineal and place specific importance on the role of women as mothers in society (Watson-Franke & Watson, sd, p. 63). However, if matricentrism is the norm in Venezuela, does that make the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* the most popular? Are women aware of the implications when they adhere to these scripts? How does *marianismo* take shape after migration? This will be explained extensively in chapter three, in which the question of agency within cultural gender-based scripts will be explained.

2.2.3. *The cultural gender-based script of the neoliberal business woman*

As was discussed in section 2.2.2, women tend to seek employment in order to earn an income to provide for their family in the host country, as well as to send remittances back home. In terms of cultural gender-based scripts, according to the traditional values that most scripts are based on, there is less room for women to engage in employment. One of the cultural gender-based scripts that allows for women to behave and position themselves in labour spheres, is that of the neoliberal business woman. The Bolivarian revolution, proposed by president Chávez in 1999, together with the influence of globalization, has improved women's status within the business sector (Putzi, 2008, p. 343). Whereas traditionally women in the business sector were frowned upon, Chávez actively contributed to the participation of women in the labour sphere. This does not mean, however, that traditional gender roles automatically adjusted. The persistent connotation of women who belong at home to take care of the children is still culturally relevant. What is essential here, is that women are individual agents who are able to shift between cultural gender-based scripts to fit a specific situation, although being restricted by the deviation from normality.

In sum, this chapter elaborated on the formation, negotiation and identification with cultural gender-based scripts, such as *marianismo*. In doing so, it became clear that these scripts are unmistakably connected to power relations, migrant social identities, gendered theories of identification, sexual identities and intersectionality. Examples of interviews illustrate how influential the beauty standard within Venezuelan culture is and how society takes shape with these ideals in mind. The discussed cultural gender-based scripts of the Chavista, the moral matriarch and that of the neoliberal businesswoman were then discussed, each pertaining to specific characteristics. However, these scripts are by no means exhaustive: many other scripts pertain within Venezuelan culture, and the most fitting ones for this research were highlighted here. In the chapter that follows, the intersectional cultural gender-based script that dominates the Venezuelan female migrant narrative in Aruba will be connected to empirically gathered data on gender-based violence, oppression and discrimination.

Chapter 3: Performing *marianismo* in Aruba

Chapter one provided this research with the theoretical grounds on which the concepts of identity, gender, culture and cultural gender-based scripts take shape. In chapter two, it was discussed how cultural gender-based scripts take shape in Venezuela. This chapter will focus on a more elaborate understanding of the consequences of performing these cultural gender-based scripts. In essence, it will be discussed how Venezuelan women negotiate and alternate cultural gender-based scripts in Aruba. Furthermore, this chapter will analyse a dataset gathered by the Women's Shelter in Aruba. This data was gathered in an effort to represent the narrative of female Venezuelan migrants who come to Aruba in this research. For each of the patterns that were detected in this dataset, a retroductive analysis from the conducted interviews with participants has followed. Especially within the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*, conclusions can be drawn with regards to labour abuse and illegal prostitution. Lastly, it will discuss how this connected system of oppression rooted in cultural gender-based scripts is addressed and countered by aid-organisations. In doing so, it will look closely at community-based support systems and economic dependency. Whereas chapter one was designed to fit a more theoretical framework, chapter two confined to a contextual explanation of the theory in Venezuela, and this chapter will focus on the empirical research findings.

3.1 Why and how *marianismo* is performed in the context of irregular migration

In order to answer the question why *marianismo* is performed in the context of irregular migration, the following results of the interviews are highlighted. With regards to the outcome of integration after arriving in the host country, female migrants are commonly isolated in conventional labour opportunities that adhere to traditional gender roles (Boyd & Grieco, 2003, p. 6). The same proposition holds for female irregular Venezuelan migrants. The migration process in itself is gendered, as for example women are more often perceived as vulnerable when it comes to international migration (Surtees, 2008, p. 17). Moreover, the exact motivations why individuals migrate differs between individuals. During interviews with Venezuelan female migrants, it was discussed that women wanted a better future for their children rather than staying in crisis-ridden Venezuela.⁶ This sketches the importance of family and women as mothers and caregivers, as discussed in the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*.

However, in order to seek a brighter future, many Venezuelans actively pursue employment opportunities to earn money and send back remittances to the family that was left behind. This is an objective seen to be pursued by all migrants, although the opportunities that are present per individual differs amongst gendered categories. This research argues that these opportunities are heavily related to how cultural gender-based scripts are perceived in host countries. More importantly, employment opportunities and the absence of a work permit are negatively correlated, meaning that it is more challenging to encounter labour opportunities if one does not own a legal permit. As will be discussed in the following chapter, many factors influence the negotiation and adaptation to and from internalised cultural gender-based scripts in the societal context of host countries.

⁶ Author's interview with participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant seventeen on May 8th, 2020 via videocall.

3.1.1. Employment opportunities in migration

In conducting in-depth interviews with irregular female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba, it became clear that most women pursued employment to pay for the higher costs in Aruba.⁷ Whether some of these women were already employed in Venezuela, can only be said for some of the interviewees. When asked about employment opportunities, one interviewee mentioned that women find employment in Aruba as irregular migrants more easily than men.⁸ The employment opportunities between male and female migrants differ in terms of availability and security.

Traditionally, the *marianismo* script dictates that women are responsible for the housework and the upbringing of the children, without being employed. This was explained in chapter two, in which it was mentioned that women in the *machismo/marianismo*-complex attain to the Catholic virtues of Virgin Mary. In Aruba, it can be said that Venezuelan women, after irregular migration, have found room to manoeuvre within the realm of cultural gender-based scripts out of economic necessity. Employment opportunities that were mentioned to be available to irregular Venezuelan migrants in Aruba, and that consequently fit the cultural gender-based scripts of *marianismo*, are working as nannies, cleaning ladies or prostitutes, whereas men are expected to work in construction.⁹ These types of employment opportunities can be thought of to be extensions from the traditional gender roles, as women are responsible for the household working as cleaning ladies and being responsible for taking care of the children. Although being employed does not fit the traditional *marianismo* script, the types of job opportunities do attain to underlying norms of female behaviour. It can be argued that working in prostitution adheres to traditional gender roles or that it is a new interpretation of how women are ought to behave. This is connected to the concepts of sexual identity and hypersexualisation, as discussed in chapter two.

With regards to security, one interviewee mentions that because most of the work that women do takes place behind closed doors, women face less risk of being deported by the migration police.¹⁰ Thus, the type of job opportunities that are available to female Venezuelan migrants is important and, in a way, restricts women from pursuing other career paths. For the male gender, working in construction brings more significant risks to safety, since one works out in the open and can thus be noticed by the police. Working in construction also carries a higher risk of becoming injured. This research argues that the assumption that women should be confined to work that appeals to their status as caregivers, mothers or housewives stems from the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*. The other way around also holds truth, that men work in construction as it is assumed that the physically harder jobs can only be performed by the male gender, an exemplification of the *machismo* script. Cultural gender-based scripts are thus of influence on the type of employment opportunities that are available to each gender, however, these scripts are redefined in the process of engaging in labour. As discussed above, engaging in labour and altering the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* has implications. It influences the way Venezuelan women are perceived by Aruban society, which will be further discussed in this chapter.

⁷ Author's interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020.

⁸ Author's interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

3.1.2. Marianismo in Aruba: The Women's Shelter.

In order to establish the narrative of irregular female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba, the following section will discuss a dataset as produced by Fundación Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad, a Women's Shelter based in Aruba. As discussed with an employee of the Women's Shelter, the Shelter is a place for all women who feel unsafe, who need to escape a certain situation or need information on how to cope with certain situations.¹¹ This includes a range of situations: domestic violence, concerns that they have about family members' situation, psychological problems they might have or when they require legal help with a divorce. The data received from the Shelter is extensive: for every person that sought help with the shelter, their age, legal status, origin, nationality, family composition, housing situation, results from the intake with a social worker and if they were admitted to the shelter, is noted. The shortcomings of this dataset was explained in the introductory chapter. This section will highlight data that reflects the overall idea of the Women's Shelter in which some conclusions can be made. The number of total cases only reflects cases that included an intake with a social worker; it does not include clients who approached the shelter to ask for information or help without having an intake.

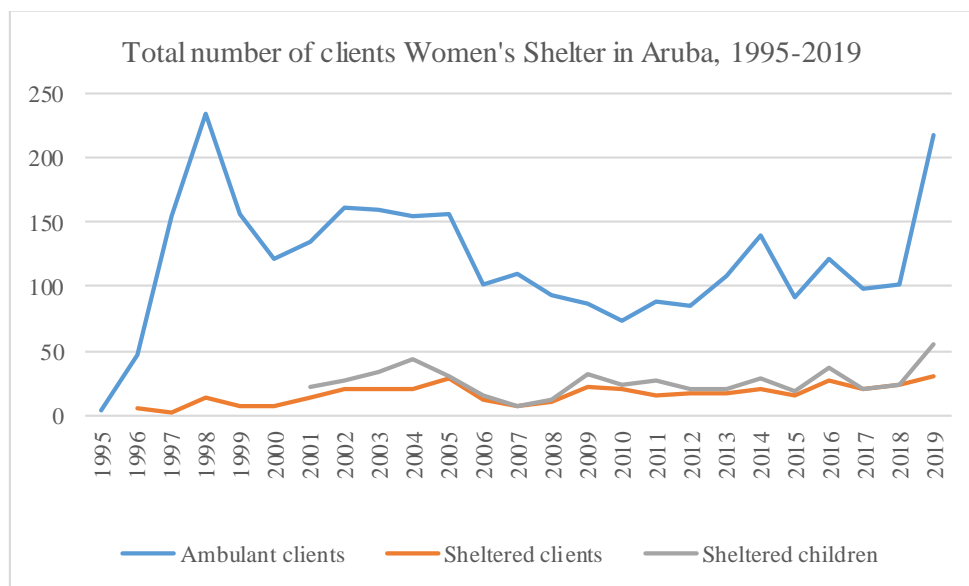


Figure 2: The total number of client cases between the years 1995-2019 (Appendix 1).

These numbers reflect cases from a variety of problematics. Here, we see an increase of almost 100% in reported cases from 2018 to 2019. This can partly be explained by existing clients who returned to the shelter, when the first instance of support did not suffice to escape the problematic situation. Another explanation can be found in the accumulation of children that were admitted to the shelter, which rose extensively in 2019.

Furthermore, the Women's Shelter keeps track of the country of origin of their clients, which is made available for the purpose of this research from 2018 to the first 4 months of 2020. The majority of clients that applied to the Shelter were of Aruban origin. To view the most dominant nationality groups in an apparent oversight, the table in Figure 3 projects the number of Arubans, Colombians, Venezuelans, Dominicans and Surinamese clients that sought help at the Women's Shelter per year.

¹¹ Author's interview with participant eleven on March 19th, 2020.

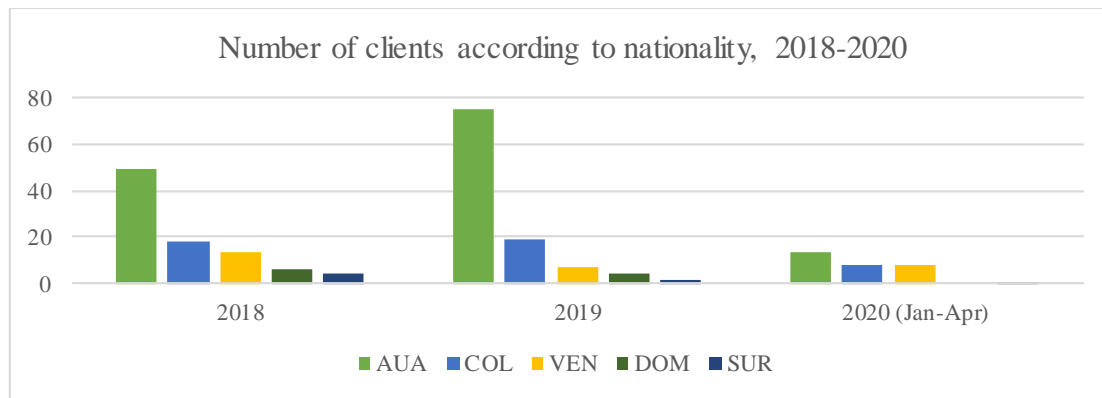


Figure 3: Number of clients according to nationality, 2018-2020 (Appendix 2)

Up until now, this research proposed an increase in the number of Venezuelan women that fled to Aruba since 2014. However, this particular dataset does not project this increase significantly. The absence of the Venezuelan exodus in these specific numbers has multiple explanations. Women might feel unsafe to report their case out of fear of deportation, women might not trust the Women’s Shelter to actually help them escape a certain situation and women might stick to their trusted group of people who share cultural material to handle issues of violence themselves. In order to explain the absence of the Venezuelan exodus in these specific numbers, the following discussions in section 3.2 and 3.3 take place, which this research argues are heavily intertwined with the application of agency, cultural gender-based scripts and the question for help in international migration.

3.2. Implications of the performance of *marianismo* in Aruba: discrimination

Interviews for the purpose of this research pointed out that female Venezuelan irregular migrants in Aruba are vulnerable to violence, discrimination and xenophobia. Venezuelan migrants who illegally enter Aruba lack proper identification and, as a result, remain in isolation and out of the street image which puts them in lesser policed situations. According to the dataset as presented by the Aruban Women’s Shelter, out of the 39 cases of Venezuelan women that applied to the Shelter, only 11 Venezuelan women had obtained a legal permit, that is, the Dutch nationality (Appendix 3). Being an illegal migrant, however, has implications when it comes to discrimination. During interviews, some migrants discussed that ‘being latino’ or not speaking the Papiamentu language, has generated discrimination and aggression from the Aruban population.¹² As will be explained, female Venezuelan irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, based on perceived female characteristics that stem from *marianismo*.

In international migration theory, it is highlighted how in the post-migration stage, gender in host countries brings different outcomes with regards to behaviour. This does not necessarily pertain to the behaviour of migrants: the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*, for example, is perceived differently by Arubans as it is by Venezuelans. Intersectionality theory partly explains this discourse: female Venezuelan irregular migrants possess intersectional identities and carry double burdens which consist of being a woman in a society dominated by of global patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, being a migrant in a host country, being Latina in a country that is influenced by European culture and being illegal in another nation-state. The discrimination that female Venezuelan irregular migrants face because of this, although not exclusively, will be discussed in the following sections.

¹² Author’s interview with participant nine on March 17th, 2020.

3.2.1. Discrimination on the basis of hypersexualisation of Venezuelan women

One example of discrimination is discrimination on the basis of the hypersexualisation of Venezuelan women. Venezuelan women who migrate to Aruba because of the deteriorating situation in their home country, are subjected to discrimination in the sense that they are referred to as ‘robo maridos’ or ‘husband stealers’.¹³ With this negative phrase, it is meant that Venezuelan women are known to marry an Aruban spouse in order to obtain legal status. It is implied that Venezuelan women make use of their attributed sexuality to persuade Aruban men into marriage. These phrases not only demonstrate the perception towards Venezuelan women in Aruba, it also influences the way Venezuelan women see themselves. One interviewee mentioned that Aruban men ‘go crazy’ for Venezuelans, which expedites the random offering of money for sexual encounters when Venezuelan women walk on the streets in Aruba.¹⁴

It can be argued that this hypersexualisation of Venezuelan women stem from the idea that Venezuelan women possess sexual identities that are being expressed through popular culture and beauty pageants. Since these sexual identities are broadcasted and communicated through popular culture, Aruban men attribute connotations to the image and sexuality of Venezuelan women. This, in combination with the need for income being an irregular migrant in a host country, might generate a tendency to work in prostitution. This is one of the fields of work that Venezuelan female migrants work in that is not reflected in the numbers of the Women’s Shelter, which can arguably be explained by the illegal nature of prostitution. The interview with participant five highlighted this.

This interviewee mentioned that she had worked in prostitution a few times because of the amount of money she earned.¹⁵ She didn’t want to, initially, but discovered how much it pays and decided to do it, a few times. She made more money in two hours than three weeks of doing her day-time job as a cleaning lady at a family household.¹⁶ It can be said that the appeal of earning more money had overtaken the morality of being a sex worker. Not that being a sex worker should be a moral question per se, however, different answers to interview-questions about Venezuelan women working in prostitution have shown that it in fact is. Interviewees mention the immorality of working as a prostitute and that these women are ‘no good’, which shows that some Venezuelan women continue to rely on Christian values that are rooted in the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*.¹⁷ The active configuration of these values, through working in prostitution, shows that women have found room to manoeuvre these cultural gender-based scripts to provide an income.

It is thus no surprise that when Venezuelan women find themselves in vulnerable situations due to international migration, they are perceived according to their countries reputation. In turn, some female Venezuelan migrants choose to, or are forced to due to migration circumstances, capitalise on this reputation and make a living for themselves, either legally or illegally. As discussed with a policy officer of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prostitution is tolerated on the island of Aruba, however, only by foreign women and in appointed bars.¹⁸ Whereas many women choose prostitution out of necessity, the Kingdom has strict regulations for foreign women who come to Aruba to work in prostitution. The two foreign ‘groups’ that are allowed to work in prostitution in Aruba are Dominican

¹³ Author’s interview with participant two on January 28th, 2020.

¹⁴ Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020.

¹⁵ Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Author’s interview with participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant seventeen on May 8th, 2020 via videocall.

¹⁸ Author’s interview with participant three on January 30th, 2020.

and Colombian women.¹⁹ These women need to visit a Dutch embassy in their home country to apply for a visa and undergo extensive interviewing on their motivations for working in prostitution.

These interviews conducted by the embassies are designed to look for signals of exploitations, to measure these women's expectations on the island and to see if they are, for example, working in prostitution to pay off outstanding debts with abusive partners. Once approved, these women are given residency and work permits for three months. This is regulated by the coordinator of human trafficking of the Aruban Police Force.

Whereas it is noteworthy how female prostitution is regulated to contradict exploitation, migrants who work illegally in prostitution are not regulated. Noticeable is that Venezuelan women are not allowed to work in prostitution and are therefore not protected by the Aruban Police Force if they engage in sex work. Illegal prostitution is often a product of migration, economic necessity and human trafficking, in which human trafficking is commonly described in combination with labour and sexual exploitation. Some female Venezuelan irregular migrants in Aruba recognize the value of *marianismo* and employ these scripts through attaining to their sexual identity and work in prostitution, whereas other female Venezuelan irregular migrants stick to the traditional interpretation of *marianismo*-values and deem prostitution as immoral.

As described in chapter one, female Venezuelan irregular migrants often fall victim to processes of sexual exploitation and human trafficking due to the gendered notion of vulnerability and submissiveness. Some women are able to choose to work in prostitution, whereas others are trafficked with the very purpose of working in prostitution. Cultural gender-based scripts therefore not exclusively allow for agency to switch between scripts, as processes of reification facilitate the placement of women within these scripts by others. Human traffickers reify the sexual identities of female Venezuelan irregular migrants and employ these identities for the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation. Cultural gender-based scripts then become inescapable.

3.2.2. *Discrimination on the basis of language*

Other forms of discrimination can be seen in the use of language. In particular, the Papiamentu language. All of the irregular Venezuelan migrants who participated in this research mentioned that they did not speak Papiamentu when they migrated to Aruba.²⁰ One explanation for this is the fact that migration often happens quickly, a national crisis entices people to move to safer areas, with less time to prepare for the migration itself. Another explanation is the multilingual nature of Aruba: almost all native individuals speak Papiamentu, which they learn at home, Dutch, which they speak at primary, secondary and high school, and English and Spanish as they learn it in their classes. The assumption that one can successfully migrate and integrate in Aruba, where they speak your native language, is thus not necessarily wrong. One participant mentioned that if she applies for a job in the hospitality sector, even though she has a legal permit to live on Aruba and is proficient in English, she tries to diminish her Venezuelan accent.²¹ Moreover, she admitted that at other times, she avoids the question of her origin and denies being Venezuelan all together to enlarge her chances of getting hired.²² The negative connotations that surround Venezuelan migrant women often restrict migrants to find employment and, in turn, escape or alter the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Author's interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020; participant ten on March 17th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020; participant sixteen on May 8th, 2020 via videocall, 2020; participant seventeen on May 8th, 2020 via videocall.

²¹ Author's interview with participant six on March 14th, 2020.

²² Ibid.

What is essential here is that governmental programs were implemented to teach young, Venezuelan children the Dutch language (R4V, 2020). The two interviewed children that participated in this research both attended these so-called ‘prisma-klassen’ in order to learn Dutch and henceforth assimilate to Aruban culture.²³ In an interview with a policy official of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was mentioned, however, that these children do not receive a diploma after finishing these classes since they are not Aruban citizens and are not officially enrolled in school.²⁴ Furthermore, children up until the age of 12 can participate in these classes, children older than 12 years old are left to their own devices.²⁵ During an interview with an employee of Fundación Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad, it was mentioned that the government nowadays is working towards an agreement that would provide these children with a diploma after they finish the language programme.²⁶ These language classes can be viewed as a chance for children to learn the Dutch language, which holds valuable information about Aruban culture and offers possibilities for Venezuelan children to acculturate, who are not rewarded nor recognized for their efforts.

3.2.3. Discrimination on the basis of perceived Venezuelan characteristics and social media

Another reported form of discrimination against irregular female Venezuelan migrants happens online, in social media, on the basis of perceived Venezuelan characteristics. The importance of social media was a returning theme in interviews with participants.²⁷ Multiple reasons for this importance can be determined. Venezuelans in Aruba depend on social media as a way to circle around the censorship the Venezuelan government has put into place in order to remain updated on the crisis in their home country and to keep in touch with friends and family that remained in Venezuela. Moreover, WhatsApp-groups of Venezuelans in Aruba are used to keep each other updated on employment opportunities, housing opportunities and police patrols.²⁸ However, the Venezuelan community, much like any other modern-day community, is very active on social media and often put videos of themselves online. In these videos, interviewees mention that Venezuelans act ‘bochinche’²⁹, a Venezuelan culturally-laden word, meaning having a loud, noisy social gathering (Tureng, 2020). A negative consequence of this online behaviour is that Aruban news sites such as 24Ora actively employ these videos to show the negative influence of irregular Venezuelans migrants in Aruba. Biased news articles demonstrate the active use of naming in order to present Venezuelan migrants negatively, with phrases such as ‘they are illegal on our island’ (24Ora, 2020). Venezuelans are presented as a bad influence, illegal refugees and as intruders on the island of Aruba. Interviewees mention that they are being influenced by these images in that people tend to believe all Venezuelans behave this way.³⁰ Interviewees admit that ‘*hay gente buena y hay gente mala*’³¹, ‘there are good people and there are bad people’; however, they mention the fact that they are being treated negatively due to these representations.

²³ Author’s interview with participant ten on March 17th, 2020; participant sixteen on May 8th, via videocall.

²⁴ Author’s interview with participant three on January 30th, 2020.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Author’s interview with participant eleven on March 19th, 2020.

²⁷ Author’s interview with participant four on March 13th, 2020; participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020.

²⁸ Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020.

²⁹ Author’s interview with participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020; participant seventeen on May 8th, 2020.

³⁰ Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020.

³¹ Author’s interview with participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020.

As discussed in chapter one, it is often the case with negative representations or stereotyping that individuals are reduced to a singular identifier which is seen to represent all that are part of that particular social group. Identities are reified and can cause inescapable social categories, such is the case with cultural gender-based scripts. The representation of Venezuelan migrants in social media is an example of this, as negative connotations are actively connected to Venezuelan culture.

The phrase ‘there are good people, and there are bad people’ explains the influence of the Venezuelan community somewhat correctly in Aruba. Since Venezuela had such a long period of economic deterioration, two participants mentioned that Venezuelans engaged in criminal activities as an alternative way to earn money and, in the process of migration, take this involvement in criminality to exercise in the host country.³² In addition, an interview with a Policy Official of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has shown that although percentage-wise more Venezuelans are engaged in criminality on the island than Arubans, these Venezuelans are suspected of operating under Aruban command.³³ Thus, it shows that the representation of a particular identity faces large consequences in times of migration and is used as a tool for individual gain. It influences processes of othering, discrimination and xenophobia, as discussed by interviewees.³⁴ The discrimination in itself is gendered: women are perceived as husband-stealers and men are perceived as criminals. These forms of discrimination can lead to abuse, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.4. Discrimination on the labour market and labour abuse

In international migration theory, it is highlighted that assumptions of migrants are essential with regards to assimilation and adaptation to the host country. The population of the host country might perceive migrants as a threat to national unity, whereas migrants are expected to cluster together as a shield of emotional protection (Van Houtum & Van Naerssen, 2002, p. 130). This is empirically evident in Aruba, where participants discussed living together with numerous other Venezuelan migrants in tiny apartments.³⁵ One participant mentioned that this was because of the shared cultural connection with other Venezuelan migrants which made her feel better about migrating to Aruba, a connection that she referred to as ‘*familias prestadas*’³⁶, a borrowed family. In Venezuela, it is custom to have a composed household, meaning that extended family lives together in one house. As discussed in chapter two, the matricentric family composition of Venezuela often holds that the father figure is disposable and often absent. Family members such as aunts and grandfathers are often heavily involved in the upbringing of small children, the grandfather often replacing the absent father figure in the children’s lives. Here, the family-centred Venezuelan culture is manifested in Aruba, as practices taken from home were brought into the host country, creating cultural significant categories, such as ‘borrowed families’. These borrowed families often provide emotional comfort and a sense of normality, as most Venezuelans enter Aruba without a permit and are therefore subjected to similar threats to safety. One participant mentioned that specifically men are being exploited when working in construction, in which she refers to this exploitation as ‘labour abuse’.³⁷ This, too, is confirmed in the findings on the data of the Women’s Shelter in Aruba.

³² Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant six on March 14th, 2020.

³³ Author’s interview with participant three on January 30th, 2020.

³⁴ Author’s interview with participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020.

³⁵ Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020.

³⁶ Author’s interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020.

³⁷ Ibid.

Amongst the 39 cases of Venezuelan migrant women who applied for help at the shelter between 2018 and April 2020, the employment rate was only 56%, in which five cases of unemployed Venezuelan migrant women reported financial abuse. As argued by Wendt, Bagshaw, Zannettino, and Adams, financial abuse is a common phenomenon in which others take advantage of one's financial dependency, although it is mostly common amongst the elderly (2015, p. 287). According to the data, the average age of a female Venezuelan who applied to the Women's Shelter is 39 years old (Appendix 3). The youngest Venezuelan migrant that applied is 21 and the oldest is 67. 21 Venezuelan women were aged between 21 and 35, 14 Venezuelan women were aged between 36 and 50 and only four women were aged between 51 and 67 (Appendix 3). The proposition that financial abuse happens mostly amongst the elderly is thus not always applicable in this specific case. Financial abuse, in this sense, explains how these women are financially dependent on their partner, in which their partner often controls the expenses in order to maintain control over their significant other. Out of these five cases of financial abuse, four women were employed (Appendix 3). Being employed, therefore, does not guarantee that financial abuse is not present. Financial dependency is important in international migration theory, as well as in cultural gender-based scripts, since patriarchal gender relations determine the economic dependency of one individual over the other. The question here is if economic dependency, or economic weakness, enforces gender weakness. This, too, is a question of intersectionality: the overlapping identities of women as caregivers and women as irregular migrants generate an environment of oppression, in which economic dependency prevails. Venezuelan female migrants in Aruba actively contradict this economic dependency, as they search for inclusion in the workforce. However, data shows that these employment opportunities do not exclude instances of financial abuse. It can thus be said that the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* is actively reconfigured in the labour spheres, although with the condition that women are still perceived as submissive. This persistent gendered assumption is seen to overrule host country dynamics.

3.3. Organizations and community-based initiatives

The last point that can be taken from the data of the Women's Shelter is that out of 39 cases, only six were referred to the Women's Shelter through organisations (Appendix 3). The other 33 cases applied to the Shelter out of their own initiative. This shows that the question for help is larger than the organisations are able to detect; however, this is not a conclusive remark. Many factors might play into the decision to apply for help at the shelter, influenced by the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*. Moreover, local, community-based initiatives provide a more helpful approach towards the precarious situations female Venezuelan irregular migrants live in.

Firstly, the type of help that is being applied to, is discussed. The most reported form of abuse by Venezuelan migrants, according to the data of the Women's Shelter, was emotional abuse, with 31 cases reporting some form of emotional, verbal or psychological abuse (Appendix 4). Physical abuse was reported in 19 cases, and sexual abuse was reported in three cases. Relevant here is to note that according to the interviewed Women's Shelter employee, people that come for help to the Shelter are often not aware of the abuse that they are suffering.³⁸ Some might face aggressive behaviour that is normalised and therefore might not report physical abuse when they are being pushed, shoved or pinched by their significant other. This behaviour is normalised in a way that it is often not perceived as 'aggressive enough' to be reported. This is a very important aspect of the data since it reflects that aggressive behaviour might be normalised in one cultural gender-based script, whereas it is frowned upon in another script. This notion is gendered, as women in the *marianismo* script are often perceived as submissive and thus perceive aggressive behaviour differently. This was confirmed in an interview

³⁸ Author's interview with participant eleven on March 19th, 2020.

with HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society that is based in Oranjestad, Aruba. During this interview, it was mentioned that because of the normalisation of violence within Venezuelan households, violence against women is often not reported nor reflected in numbers on violence against migrants.³⁹

Nevertheless, these programmes are still under development and face important issues when it comes to their credibility. In an interview with the Gender-Based Violence Officer of HIAS, it was mentioned that issues such as a lack of scope of the problematics, the level of trust between migrants and organisations, the inability to give assurance regarding migration status and the lack of visibility of these support programmes are reasons why support programmes do not provide enough coverage for the problematics at hand.⁴⁰ Moreover, it was said that migrants are often unaware of their rights as human beings, as policies change quickly.⁴¹ HIAS recognizes the importance of cultural gender-based scripts by acknowledging the normalisation of violence within Venezuelan culture and actively tries to implement more easily accessible support services such as empowerment coaches and referrals to psychological, legal or judicial services.

Secondly, the difference between local, community-based initiatives and support programmes by international organisations is important. The inability of international organisations to suffice the provision of help for female Venezuelan migrants was confirmed during interviews: of the eight adult Venezuelan migrants, none of them was able to mention one (international) organisation that provides support programmes for Venezuelan migrants in Aruba.⁴²

The more local, community-based initiatives, such as community programmes and programmes offered by the church, were better known amongst the interviewees for this research.⁴³ An important notion that underlies this distinction is that local, community-based initiatives are intertwined with processes of identification within cultural gender-based scripts. Originally, Venezuela is a country that has a high percentage of church goers. This means that after migration, possibly in order to return to normality after migration to a host country or to seek strength and mental support in religion, Venezuelan migrants attend the church and their support programmes. This, too, is because of the variety in support programmes: programmes surrounding mental health, food provision and education for children are only a few of the programmes that are being exercised. This feeds into the direct, or primary necessity of migrants: a sense of community, food to eat and a place to harbour their children when they seek for employment.

In sum, the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* influences the types of employment opportunities that are available to female Venezuelan irregular migrants. Moreover, this script is reified through human trafficking, forcing some female migrants to work in prostitution. Others choose to work in prostitution and thereby actively employ *marianismo* to avoid economic dependency on others; however, are faced with discrimination. Labour and sexual abuse is common amongst female Venezuelan migrants, since the underlying assumption of female submissiveness causes financial abuse amongst these women. Discrimination on the basis of language and perceived Venezuelan characteristics perpetuates this image of female Venezuelan irregular migrants, causing negative representation and discrimination. Lastly, support programmes for Venezuelan migrants are more known if they are local and community-based, attaining to *marianismo*-characteristics such as faith-based support.

³⁹ Author's interview with participant eight on March 16th, 2020.

⁴⁰ Author's interview with participant eight on March 16th, 2020.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Author's interview with participant four on March 14th, 2020; participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020; participant seventeen on May 8th, 2020.

⁴³ Author's interview with participant five on March 14th, 2020; participant six on March 14th, 2020; participant seven on March 15th, 2020; participant nine on March 17th, 2020; participant twelve and thirteen on March 19th, 2020; participant seventeen on May 8th, 2020.

Discussion: Hidden and apparent acculturation

The main discussion on cultural gender-based scripts included the formation of specific patterns of behaviour during specific events that call for fitting behaviour. Fitting behaviour, in this sense, means the behavioural patterns that generate income in times of migration. The lack of income and the structural discrimination against Venezuelan migrants is evidently connected to the tendency to behave according to the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*. One of the ways that discrimination on a structural basis can be viewed is as structural violence. Here, this research refers to the assumption that violence can either be regarded as force, or as violation (Bufacchi, 2005, p. 196). However, as was argued by Galtung, this structural violence is based on the assumption that attitudes and assumptions are formed unconsciously due to structures which facilitate a false image of the apparent contradiction in violence (1996, p. 74). This discussion aims to place this research in a wider academic perspective and will argue for the ability of individuals to act as rational actors, rather than unconscious actors. This means that cultural gender-based scripts, previously assumed to be unconsciously pursued by actors, are scripts of behaviour that are chosen to perform. This finds resonance with the cultural iceberg of Femmes and Hapgood (1997, p. 17), in which it is demonstrated that certain cultural characteristics are apparent and others are hidden. The adaptation to these cultural characteristics would be an act of consciously pursuing to understand the hidden cultural characteristics. Although this discussion would have been of value to understand cultural gender-based scripts in international migration, it simply did not fit within the determined framework of this research.

Alternative research questions that would have provided this research with a framework to include conscious and unconscious performance of cultural gender-based scripts, would have been focused on apparent and hidden cultural signifiers. One example would be: ‘In which way do female Venezuelan irregular migrants consciously acculturate to aspects of Aruban cultural gender-based scripts, in the context of irregular migration?’ With the aim of exploring this alternative debate, the following section will position this research question within the academic debate of rationality, internalist and externalist rational choice theory. It will briefly discuss how rationality influences the performance of certain cultural characteristics, and will present notions of this within the conducted interviews.

4.1. Internalist and externalist rational choice theory

One important theory that underlines the thought process of human interaction is the idea that people are rational actors, or ‘utility maximizers’, who make decisions based on outweighing the costs and benefits, as proposed by Paul Collier’s rational choice theory (Demmers, 2017, p. 108). This theoretical insight found resonance within the realm of social constructivist theory, in which a distinction is made between internalist and externalist decision-making. In internalist rational choice theory, one bases its decision to choose X or Y on a set of perceived or desired benefits and is thus subjective of nature (Aguilar & De Francisco, 2009, p. 549). For externalist rational choice theory, it is believed that rational choice merely describes the cognitive process and that the explanation of decision making is found in the external, that is, structures that govern social life (Aguilar & De Francisco, 2009, p. 550). The distinction thus lies within the focus on the internal, the cognitive processes that lead to utility maximization, and the external, the utility maximization within the social structure that the decision is made in.

In chapter two, it is explained that social constructivism holds that individuals possess multiple parts of an identity which are formed in interaction with others and are subjected to change. In-groups and out-groups determine a categorisation of society that teaches individuals in interaction how to behave and where they 'belong'. Likewise, social identity theory suggests that human interaction is based on self-categorisation and self-understanding, as discussed in Foucault's work (1987). For internalist and externalist rational choice theory, these propositions hold truth, although the theory positions these propositions within the realm of structures and agency. Aguiar and De Francisco conclude that internalist interpretations of rational choice theory explain more clearly the cognitive and internal reasoning of determining social identities (2009, p. 566), a theoretical insight that this research argues is positioned on the axis of agency, rather than the axis of structures.

4.2 Thin rationality, thick rationality and cultural gender-based scripts

Following this internalist interpretation of rational choice theory, this research places the importance of these theoretical insights within the internalised rationality of choice. Rationality dictates that humans make rational decisions and weigh the costs and benefits of a certain decision to seek the best possible outcome. However, in social identity formation, in which outcomes are determined by behaviour of others who simultaneously implement a cost and benefit rationale, the perceived costs and benefits are subjected to change. How one behaves might have one outcome in one context when surrounded by one group of people, whereas the same behaviour in another context and in another group of people produces different outcomes. Up until here, this research has argued that cultural gender-based scripts are performed scripts of behaviour that generate outcomes in particular social contexts. Moreover, in the context of migration, these scripts are subjected to changing social contexts, meaning that in order to reach the same outcomes, behaviour should be changed accordingly. As suggested above, it is the internalist rational choice theory that best explains the motivations behind certain choices, or as discussed by Demmers, thick rationality: it aspires to reveal the origin of motivations and preferences (2017, p. 114). The origin of motivations and preferences is of vital importance when it comes to agency and structures, as they can be instrumentalised to demonstrate where certain ideas come from and how they are outed in social interaction.

As discussed in chapter one of this research, the research question that guides these chapter asks *why* and *how* female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba perform the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* in times of irregular migration. Chapter two and three have sought to explain motivations behind these cultural- and gender-infused roles: employment opportunities available to female Venezuelan irregular migrants are heavily influenced by *marianismo*, in that female Venezuelans are characterised as caring, loving and hard working. Nevertheless, it was mentioned that a negative perception of female Venezuelan irregular migrants as 'husband stealers' and prostitutes exacerbates the discrimination of this particular social group. Up until here, the perceptions and opinions on Venezuelan migrants have taken the academic spotlight, whereas this section aims to highlight the processes of identification and non-identification of female Venezuelan irregular migrants from within. It is then argued that the assimilation to cultural gender-based scripts such as *marianismo* is not only a process that takes place out of habit, it, too, can be regarded as a process of strategic deliberation. Evidence for the conscious adaptation to *marianismo* in the host country of Aruba is found in the interviews and will be explained in the next paragraphs.

4.3 Evidence for conscious adaptation to *marianismo*

The conscious adaptation to the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* is evidently present amongst female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba. One participant mentioned that she feels as if she represents Venezuelan women as a whole in times of migration, and so, she must be the best version of herself.⁴⁴ She explained that she felt obliged to show others that Venezuelans are good people and emphasised that she must be warm-hearted, serviceful and kind to the Aruban.⁴⁵ The motivation for this behaviour, she mentions, is because she feels sad for her people back in Venezuela who undergo the extensive oppression as part of the crisis and consequently, under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁶ This research argues that the specific framing of ‘being serviceful’ and ‘warm-hearted’ is a characteristic of the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*, or at the very least derived from the assumption that Venezuelan women are expected to be submissive, and can thus be considered a conscious adaptation.

When asked about how she would describe herself, another participant mentioned she had to change her personality drastically when she arrived in Aruba.⁴⁷ She mentions that she used to be a very cheerful person, always happy and extroverted, but she felt as if she had to change due to the migration process in Aruba.⁴⁸ In her own words, she said that “I had to work on another personality that was more submissive, introverted to not bother anyone with my happiness, I had to manage myself in order to fit in with the family I work for”.⁴⁹ Here, too, it can be argued that the transformation of personality and character traits, or rather, the downplaying of certain characteristics, can be accredited to the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*. The submissiveness of female identities is a key component of the gender-based norms that dominate in global patriarchy and the fact that this participant feels that she needs to be introverted in order to fit in with her employers’ family, displays the mental strain these scripts pose upon these women.

In continuation, the participant mentioned that she feels insecure and has a low self-esteem, as she explained that this change in character was something that she never imagined she needed to do.⁵⁰ By saying that she ‘needed to do this’, this participant specifically highlights the necessity of adaptation to a behavioural script that would facilitate her integration in a host country.

To conclude upon the discussion, further research within the domain of conscious and unconscious adaptation to cultural gender-based scripts is necessary to express definitive conclusions on this topic. This discussion section, however, has shown that thick and thin rationality provide an interesting context for concepts such as cultural gender-based scripts, in order to look beyond the scope of human social behaviour and into the realm of psychology. Further research on this topic should include more thorough, in-depth interviews with female Venezuelan irregular migrants to uncover practices of conscious and unconscious adaptation, negotiation and performance of cultural gender-based scripts.

⁴⁴ Author’s interview with participant seven on April 29th, 2020.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Author’s interview with participant twelve on May 5th, 2020.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., author’s translation.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore the processes and motivations behind the negotiation, adaptation and performance of the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* amongst female Venezuelan irregular migrants who migrated to Aruba between 2014 and 2020. In doing so, it drew upon the theoretical realms of social constructivism, gender theory, international migration theory and intersectionality theory to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

Why and how do female Venezuelan migrants in Aruba perform the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* that highlights traditional gender roles, in the context of irregular migration between 2014 and 2020?

1. In which way do processes of social identity formation establish cultural gender-based scripts and how do underlying cultural and gender norms play into this?
2. How are Venezuelan women portrayed and sexualised in popular culture and media, and how does this play into the formation of the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*?
3. How does intersectionality come into play in the (in)ability to redefine cultural gender-based scripts?
4. How do female Venezuelan irregular migrants (re)define these scripts and what room for manoeuvre do they identify and act upon?
5. How is the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* perceived within Aruban society?
6. How is this connected system of oppression rooted in cultural gender-based scripts addressed and countered by aid organisations?

In chapter one, the processes of identity formation were discussed. More importantly, the connections between identity, gender and migration were forged, in order to understand the concept of cultural gender-based scripts from a diverse academic perspective. It was concluded that global patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity influence the formation and performance of a social identity in social interaction, in that male-dominated rules of behaviour deem the female gender submissive. Gender thus pertains to varying 'rules of behaviour', which are constructed into scripts, determined by cultural influences and assumptions on gender. Socially relevant categories then divide who is expected to follow which script, dictated by group boundaries and processes of reification. Moreover, intersectionality theory views gender and identity as overlapping: individuals possess multiple, overlapping identities that exist alongside each other, creating complex systems of identity that face multiple forms of oppression. Cultural gender-based scripts therefore present information about rules of behaviour pertaining to cultural and gendered norms, influencing the way in which individuals are expected to behave within a social system. The answer to sub-question one, therefore, entails that processes of social identity formation establish cultural gender-based scripts through establishing boundaries between groups of individuals, which are subjected to social interaction and are infused by culture and gender norms.

These cultural gender-based scripts were then discussed in the context of international migration. It was mentioned how migrants tend to adapt their cultural gender-based scripts to match the host country dynamics, or how they reinforce these scripts to create a sense of normality. This, however, is an intricate process in which individuals often do not possess the agency to act according to personal preferences. Processes of reification can turn identities unchangeable, meaning that certain rules of behaviour do not allow to switch between cultural gender-based scripts. Moreover, human trafficking and other processes of exploitation take away this agency and diminish migrant identities for the purpose of economic gain. Additionally, exploitation severely threatens the lives and well-being of migrants.

In order to generate an understanding of cultural gender-based scripts in practice, chapter two explained the cultural context of Venezuela. More specifically, it explained the influence of popular culture and with that, how Venezuelan beauty pageants determine the national beauty standard in Venezuela. It was argued that beauty pageants are aimed at controlling the Venezuelan gendered narrative, in that it dictates cultural gender-based scripts in Venezuela. These scripts are rooted in the *machismo/marianismo*-complex, a culturally significant narrative on the role of women in society. *Marianismo* is a cultural gender-based script that is based on the virtues of Virgin Mary, deeming women as serviceful, loving mothers and submissive wives. These virtues are internalised by young Venezuelan women through the representations of Venezuelan women in national beauty pageants. Beauty pageants are thus seen as a contemporary expression of the centuries-long influence of images of *marianismo*. The theory of intersectionality then explains that Venezuelan cultural gender-based scripts stem from historically relevant colonial influences of race and discrimination. Sub-question two and three can therefore be concluded upon in the following way: The hypersexualisation of Venezuelan women set a high beauty standard, which consequently is expressed through popular culture such as beauty pageants, and is internalised by Venezuelan women. In other words: women are ought to perform femininity in the social sphere. In addition, Catholic societal expectations stemming from *marianismo* generate rules of behaviour for female Venezuelans, henceforth establishing the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*. These societal expectations form identities that overlap: women should be both Catholic and hypersexual, an intersectional identity that makes cultural gender-based scripts overlap.

Chapter three then aimed to connect the aforementioned theory and context into the empirical realm in order to answer sub-question four, five and six, as well as the main research question. Firstly, it was established that through the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo*, specific types of employment are defined, on which women can capitalise to attain an economically strong position in the host country. *Marianismo* thus provides job opportunities, although this is by no means implied by the script itself. By concluding this, it becomes clear that female Venezuelan irregular migrants redefine the script of *marianismo*, at least to the extent that these women are able to engage in employment opportunities. In other words, to answer sub-question four, it is concluded that female Venezuelan irregular migrants have found room to manoeuvre within the script of *marianismo* to generate an income. Moreover, the data of the Women's Shelter was introduced, to explain the narrative of female Venezuelan irregular migrants in Aruba. Although the Women's Shelter does not require discussing migration status, it could be concluded that women feel unsafe to report a case out of fear for deportation, which explains how the numbers of Venezuelan clients do not reflect the current migration crisis problematics.

In order to answer sub-question five, further analysis of the empirically gathered data through interviews followed and through retroductive analysis, patterns of discrimination became clear: discrimination on the basis of hypersexualisation, language, Venezuelan characteristics, social media and discrimination on the labour market explained how female Venezuelan irregular women are positioned within the Aruban context. Furthermore, it was explained that through the support programmes that were implemented to aid these migrants, the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* provided a shared cultural connection on the basis of religion. To answer sub-question six, therefore, the type of help that is being offered, the credibility of the aid-programmes and the difference between international organisations and local, community based initiatives was highlighted. Through community-based support programmes, mostly provided by the church, a sense of trust was built to provide irregular migrants direct and essential support in terms of food, clothing and day-care-services.

Therefore, to answer the main research question of why female Venezuelan irregular migrants perform the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* in the context of irregular migration to Aruba: because it presents opportunities. The cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* provides employment opportunities in order to generate an income. Nevertheless, the perceptions that come with this script

generate heavy discrimination against female Venezuelan irregular migrants. The underlying notions of female submissiveness, traditional gender roles and the notion of illegality heavily weighs against these women and generates a reluctance to incorporate these women into Aruban society. Women are therefore required to find alternative paths to generate income.

To answer the question of how these women perform *marianismo*: female Venezuelan irregular migrants perform underlying notions of female submissiveness to find shelter in the homes of Aruban men, they perform traditional gender roles to find employment, they are serviceful to other Venezuelan migrants to create a sense of community and they perform idealised values of their sexual identity to generate an income. Venezuelan women have found ways to manoeuvre the cultural gender-based script of *marianismo* to generate positive outcomes, or rather, to facilitate their primary needs. This research outcome is of scientific and social relevance, as it argues against the passive role of Venezuelan migrants and demonstrates the human ability to adopt agency and to provide for their own necessities. Instead of viewing female Venezuelan irregular migrants as victims of the circumstances that made them initiate the migration, it shows the tremendous resilience of these women to turn negative circumstances into positive outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The total number of client cases, 1995-2019.

Year	Ambulant clients	Sheltered clients	Sheltered children
1995	4		
1996	47	6	
1997	155	3	
1998	234	14	
1999	156	7	14
2000	122	8	
2001	135	14	22
2002	161	21	27
2003	159	21	33
2004	154	21	44
2005	157	28	30
2006	101	12	16
2007	110	7	8
2008	93	11	13
2009	86	22	32
2010	74	20	24
2011	89	15	27
2012	85	18	21
2013	109	18	21
2014	139	21	28
2015	91	16	19
2016	122	27	37
2017	99	21	21
2018	102	24	24
2019	217	31	55

Source: Fundacion Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad.

Appendix 2: Number of clients according to nationality, 2018-2020.

Year	Aruban	Colombian	Venezuelan	Dominican	Surinamese
2018	49	18	14	6	4
2019	75	19	7	4	2
2020	14	8	8	0	1

Source: Fundacion Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad.

Appendix 3: Total number of Venezuelan clients, 2018-2020

Month of admission	Age	Born in	Nationality	Legal status	Gender	Referred by	Employed
jan-18	35	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
jan-18	50	VEN	VEN	L	F	Red Cross	No
may-18	45	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	Yes
may-18	30	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	Yes
may-18	34	VEN	VEN		F	Self	Yes
jun-18	49	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
jul-18	26	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	No
aug-18	67	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	Yes
sep-18	25	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	No
sep-18	63	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
sep-18	28	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	No
sep-18	38	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
sep-18	52	VEN	VEN		F	Self	No
dec-18	44	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
jan-19	23	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
feb-19	36	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
may-19	35	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
may-19	32	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
jun-19	33	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
jun-19	43	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
jul-19	58	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	No
aug-19	47	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	Yes
aug-19	31	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
aug-19	34	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
sep-19	30	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	No
sep-19	41	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	Yes
sep-19	34	VEN	VEN	I	F	Hospital	Yes
okt-19	50	VEN	NL	L	F	Respaldo	No
okt-19	28	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	Yes
okt-19	41	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
okt-19	47	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	Yes
jan-20	50	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
jan-20	34	VEN	VEN	I	F	Self	No
jan-20	48	VEN	NL	L	F	Self	Yes
feb-20	31	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
feb-20	32	VEN	VEN	L	F	WGK	No
feb-20	21	VEN	VEN	L	F	Self	Yes
feb-20	34	VEN	VEN	L	F	Holiday Inn	Yes
mrt-20	30	VEN	VEN	I	F	IOM	No

Source: Fundacion Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad.

Appendix 4: Type of reported abuse amongst female Venezuelan migrants.

Intake	Emotional abuse: abuse, stalking, accusations, death threats	Physical abuse	Sexual abuse
1		X	X
2			
3	X	X	
4	X	X	
5	X	X	
6	X		X
7	X		
8	X		
9	X	X	
10	X	X	
11	X	X	
12	X		
13	X		
14			X
15	X	X	
16	X	X	
17	X		
18	X	X	
19	X		
20			
21	X	X	
22	X		
23	X	X	
24			
25	X		
26	X		
27	X	X	
28	X		
29	X		
30	X		
31	X	X	
32	X		
33	X	X	
34			
35	X	X	
36	X	X	
37			
38	X	X	
39		X	
Total:	31	19	3

Source: Fundacion Pa Hende Muhe Den Dificultad.

Appendix 5: Plagiarism declaration.

Declaration of Originality/Plagiarism Declaration MA Thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights Utrecht University

(course module GKMV 16028)

I hereby declare:

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

"Plagiarism is the appropriation of another author's works, thoughts, or ideas and the representation of such as one's own work." (Emphasis added.)⁵¹

Similarly, the University of Cambridge defines "plagiarism" as "*... submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity.*" (Emphasis added.)⁵²

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

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Title of MA thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights:

Identity as a tool: The Venezuelan Migration Crisis in Aruba.

⁵¹ <https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/policies-and-procedures/fraud-and-plagiarism>

⁵² <http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/universitys-definition-plagiarism>

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent:

Participant number / name:

Declaration of Research Participation:

By signing this letter, I agree to be aware of the aim of this research. I give permission to only use my information for the purpose of this research, which will be processed without mention of my name and other personal information. At all times I hold the right to decline and stop my participation with this research.

Date:

Participant's signature:

.....

To be completed by the researcher:

I, the researcher, hereby confirm that the aim of research is explained to the participant and all personal information will be processed anonymously.

Signature:

E.J. Boekelder:

.....

Appendix 7: Interview guide

This interview guide served as a guideline in conducting the interviews with female Venezuelan irregular migrants. At any point during the interviews, these questions were being asked when the interviewer deemed the situation fitting to the theme. It should be noted that not every interview included all of the themes and not every participant was asked the same questions, hence the semi-structured interviews.

	Possible questions	Rationale
Theme one: Leaving Venezuela	When did you leave Venezuela and could you describe your journey? Why did you leave Venezuela?	Understanding the motivation behind migration and possible implications during migration.
Theme two: Arriving in Aruba	When did you arrive in Aruba and how did you arrive? Who was the first person you encountered?	Understanding the arrival in Aruba and possible striking features during arrival.
Theme three: First period in Aruba	What did you do first, after arrival? How did you feel in your first week in Aruba?	Gaining insight in the disassociation from Venezuelan culture, unveiling possible hidden cultural identifiers that may have caused troubles with integration.
Theme four: Course of assimilation	Which parts of Aruban culture surprised you? Do you feel different from Arubans?	Locating the cultural difference between Venezuela and Aruba, aim to locate specific sets of identifiers that represent this difference.
Theme five: Aruban culture	What do you think of Aruban people? Did you experience violence or discrimination during your stay in Aruba?	Uncovering the perception of Aruban people and culture and informing about their experience after migration.

Appendix 8: Participant List

Participant Number	Date	Migrant/ Organisation	Age	Gender	Interview/ Digital
One	February 1 st , 2020	Dutch Ministry of Defence	-	M	Digital
Two	January 28 th , 2020	PhD-researcher	-	M	Digital
Three	January 20 th , 2020	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	-	M	Interview
Four	March 13 th , 2020	Migrant	27	F	Interview
Five	March 14 th , 2020	Migrant	32	F	Interview
Six	March 14 th , 2020	Migrant	31	F	Interview
Seven	March 15 th , 2020	Migrant	49	F	Interview
Eight	March 16 th , 2020	HIAS	-	F	Interview
Nine	March 17 th , 2020	Migrant	30	M	Interview
Ten	March 17 th , 2020	Migrant	9	F	Interview
Eleven	March 19 th , 2020	Women's Shelter	-	F	Digital
Twelve	March 19 th , 2020	Migrant	35	F	Interview
Thirteen	March 19 th , 2020	Migrant	23	F	Interview
Fourteen	February 28 th , 2020	Aruban Police Corps	-	M	Digital
Fifteen	May 1 st , 2020	Migrant	43	M	Digital
Sixteen	May 8 th , 2020	Migrant	12	F	Digital
Seventeen	May 8 th , 2020	Migrant	41	F	Digital