

UA Repository

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

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Kapanadze, Ketí
Citation	Kapanadze, K. (2020). Beyond Opinion Polls: Multiple Voices of (Non-)Sovereignty from Aruban People. In Mijts, E., Ballantyne, J. (2020). UAUCU Student Research Exchange - Collected Papers 2020. University of Aruba, 15 - 34.
Publisher	University of Aruba/University College Utrecht
Journal	UAUCU Student Research Exchange – Collected Papers 2020
Download date	2026-03-09 17:55:08
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14473/1724



Keti Kapanadze, University College Utrecht

Everlasting memory - always light and constantly blue

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

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

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

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

But,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I know I will.

Until next time Aruba.

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

Keti Kapanadze



(Oranjestad, Aruba)

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

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

Section I: Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Methods

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

i) Interviews

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

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

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

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

ii) Participant observation

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

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

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

iii) Newspapers

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

Limitations

i) Language

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

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

ii) Time

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

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

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

iii) *COVID-19*

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

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

Positionality and reflexivity: How did I affect my research?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) Colonial Power Matrix and Coloniality

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

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

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

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

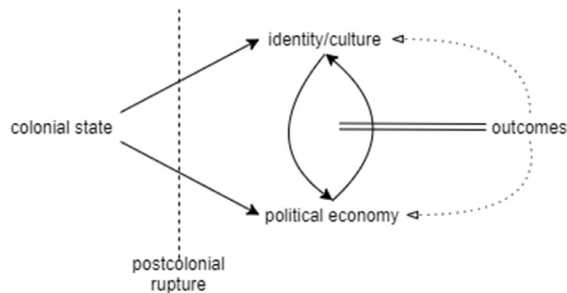
modernity/coloniality Group. The entry point to this group is the idea that decolonization was one of the most powerful myths of the 20th century, which created an illusion that by removing colonial administrations, the territories would be decolonized. However, “the heterogenous and multiple global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

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

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

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

My visualization of the colonial matrix:



(Diagram by author)

Section IV: Setting the stage - History of

Aruba

i) *Colonialism and separacion*

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

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

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

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

ii) *Status Aparte*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section VI: Why status aparte - Aruba as a belonging

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) *Resistance to the Antillean belonging and identity*

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

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

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

ii) *National pride*

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

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

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

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

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

Section VII: Conclusion

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section VIII: References

- Alofs, Luc (2011). Van Separacion tot Status Aparte: Geschiedenis en achtergronden van de status aparte-beweging op Aruba. *De Gids*, (153), 518-526
- Aronoff, M. J., & Kubik, J. (2013). *Anthropology and political science: A convergent approach* (Vol. 3). Berghahn Books
- Auyero, J. (2006). Introductory note to politics under the microscope: Special issue on political ethnography I. *Qualitative Sociology*, 29(3), 257-259
- Cardoso, F. H., & Faletto, E. (1979). *Dependency and development in Latin America (Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina, engl.)*. Univ of California Press
- Clegg, P. (2012). Independence movements in the Caribbean: withering on the vine?. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 50(4), 422-438
- De Jong, L., & Kruijt, D. (2005). *Extended statehood in the Caribbean: Paradoxes of quasi colonialism, local autonomy, and extended statehood in the USA, French, Dutch, and British Caribbean*. Rozenberg Publishers
- Frank, A. G. (1966). *The development of underdevelopment* (pp. 17-30). Boston: New England Free Press
- Grosfoguel, R. (2002). *Colonial difference, geopolitics*

- of knowledge, and global coloniality in the modern/ colonial capitalist world-system. Review (Fernand Braudel Center), 203-224
- Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality. *Transmodernity: journal of peripheral cultural production of the luso-hispanic world*, 1(1)
 - Kapoor, I. (2008). *The postcolonial politics of development*. Routledge
 - Klinkers, I., & Oostindie, G. (2003). *Decolonising the Caribbean* (p. 292). Amsterdam University Press
 - Manuel, G. (2007). The socio-political matrix and economic development in Chile
 - Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 449-514
 - Quijano, A. (2007). Coloniality and modernity/ rationality. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 168-178
 - Razak, V. (1995). Culture under construction: The future of native Aruban identity. *Futures*, 27(4), 447-459
 - Schatz, E. (Ed.). (2013). *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power*. University of Chicago Press
 - Veenendaal, W., & Oostindie, G. (2018). Head versus heart: The ambiguities of non-sovereignty in the Dutch Caribbean. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 28(1), 25-45
 - Vrsti, W. (2008). The strange case of ethnography and international relations. *Millennium*, 37(2), 279-301
 - Wallerstein, I. (1984). *The politics of the world-economy: The states, the movements and the civilizations*. Cambridge University Press
 - Wallerstein, I. M., & Wallerstein, S. R. I. (2004). *World-systems analysis: An introduction*. Duke University Press
 - Wedeen, L. (2010). Reflections on ethnographic work in political science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13, 255-272
 - Wilkinson, C. (2013). Not just finding what you (thought you) were looking for: Reflections on fieldwork data and theory. *Interpretation and method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, 387-405
 - Zirakzadeh, C. E. (2009). When nationalists are not separatists: Discarding and recovering academic theories while doing fieldwork in the Basque region of Spain. *Political ethnography: what immersion contributes to the study of power*, 97-118