

Organizational Identification

How cultural background congruency with the organization and product **determines tourism board's employees'** organizational identification



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Master Thesis

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I have always carried my great uncle's word with me through life:

"Your education is your wealth that no one can take away from you".

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Thankfully,
Kimberly Kuiperi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Intercultural encounters are as old as humanity while multinational businesses are as old as organized states. Yet, little research has been performed on what fosters organizational identification, particularly within the context of multinational businesses. The proper functioning of multinational business organizations depends on intercultural communication and cooperation. So, how do individuals with different cultural backgrounds communicate and cooperate for the well-being of the entire organization? Specifically, when it comes to self- categorization, how do employees categorize themselves within a company with different cultural background then those of the employees? The current study addresses the cultural diversity amongst employees within a culture representative organization.

The purpose is to determine how the culture mixture within an organization affects the employee self-identification. The cultural backgrounds explored in this study are Aruban, Latin American, North American and European.

Method. Based on nineteen qualitative interviews conducted via Skype with various international representatives of the Aruba Tourism Authority, this study demonstrates how these international representatives categorize themselves within an “Aruban Organization”.

Results. The results of the current study indicate that the participants make a distinction between the organization and the product they represent as it relates to the identification within the organization. It appears that the majority of the participants identified with the product, rather than with the organization. Majority of the participants reported that there are no in or out-groups within the organizations, and the need to be part of the in-group is not a necessity. The results demonstrate how non-demographic similarities such as social motives, perceived external prestige and goals shape the employees self-categorization within the organization.

Conclusion. The current study demonstrates that cultural differences are not an obstacle to organizational identification. However, in the context of tourism bureaus the identification with the organization is not the priority goal of the international representatives. Tourism board employees categorize themselves as part of the organization based on the product they work for and the similarities they encounter with the cultural background of the organization.

Keywords: *Organizational Identification, Culture values, Self-categorization, Cultural background.*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Organizational identification, which refers to the psychological bonding between an individual and his or her work organization, has gained increasing attention primarily because of its assumed link with behavior associated with enhanced organizational performance (Benkhoff, 1997). According to Ouchi (1998), an individual who identifies with the organization is assumed to work instinctively for the well-being of the organization. Organizational identification, often measured in terms of shared values and goals between the individual and the organization, is also viewed as a means for providing cohesion throughout the organization. Cohesion is considered especially important for large organizations where the subunits are geographically dispersed and comprised of employees as culturally diverse as those found in multinational corporations (Gronhaug & Nordhaug, 1992; Scullion, 1995). However, little research has been performed on what brings up organizational identification, particularly in the context of a Multinational Corporation. In the case of MNC's, managerial employees have been shown to draw a distinction between their local subsidiary and the global organization as manifest in separate group identifications (Gregersen & Black, 1992; Raede, 2001).

The social identity theory illustrates that besides identification on a personal level, people also identify themselves based upon the perception of oneness or belongingness to a social group or groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). These groups could be based on family, organizations, workgroups, gender, their career and their cultural background. According to Rosso (2010) belongingness is one of the mechanisms to explain how work becomes meaningful. This in turn affects the organizational identification, because this is strong when a person feels he or she is of great value to his or her organization (Homans, 1958; White, 1959).

A component part of the social identity theory is the in and out groups process. To be part of the in-group is important because this leads to motivation and overall job satisfaction. In-groups are formed by shared beliefs, values and cultural background and thus the out-group is the opposite (Hogg, 2000). Employees who work for multinational companies have several factors to take into consideration, such as not being from the same country as the organization is, being located in a country where he or she is not originally from and dealing in general with different cultural backgrounds. Even though nowadays countries and organizations are becoming more and more multicultural, it is still a different scenario for a company that represents a certain culture and employs people who do not share that same cultural background. Hereafter, this study assumes that the process for those types

of entities must be different in terms of self-categorization, communication and sense-making in the tourism authorities' environment. One of the reasons for this assumption is because there have been no current studies done on this specific context.

The present study analyzes the organizational culture, self-categorization and identification process in the context of the Aruba Tourism Authority offices around the globe. Aruba Tourism Authority (hereafter referred to as ATA), the destination marketing and management organization for Aruba, is one of the most important organizations of the island. ATA is responsible for coordinating destination marketing, destination development and destination partnerships. Its importance is due to the tourism industry's status as the most significant economic pillar of Aruba, forming about three quarters of the island's gross national product. ATA's mission, besides increasing the economic value derived from tourism for the benefit of the community and their stakeholders, is to increase the island's share of affluent travelers by promoting destination Aruba in specific target markets. Achieving this mission requires hiring international services, from travel agents to marketing and public relations agencies. ATA has its headquarters in Aruba and has three other offices that represent ATA in the three major target markets, namely Venezuela (South America), New York (North-America) and the Netherlands (Europe).

Each of these international offices has contracts with agencies which work at the promotion and selling of Aruba as a destination for that particular market. In each of these three markets there are more countries and states where the Aruba Tourism Authority operates as well. In total the Aruba Tourism Authority has more than twenty offices and / or representatives worldwide. Having representatives abroad involves employing people from that particular market, in other words non-Arubans working for Aruba as a Caribbean destination. These non-Arubans might not have perfect knowledge about the product Aruba as an Aruban would, however he or she knows the market that Aruba needs to target perfectly because of their cultural background similarities. Recognizing the importance of employing non-Arubans for the promotion of the destination Aruba implies that to understand how they feel in terms of categorizing him or herself within the organization is ideal and necessary since it is viewed as one of the ingredients of organizational success (Ashforth and Meal, 1989).

Interestingly, there are no existing studies performed regarding the relationship between the employees own cultural background and the organizational cultural background at tourism bureaus. The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship of the organizational culture and the employee's cultural background

in relation to the promotion of Aruba as a vacation destination. Moreover, to find out if they categorize themselves as part of the in-group or not and what kind of consequences arises in terms of organizational identification. The following study presents a literature review of existing research which relates to the following research question:

“How do employees categorize themselves in an organization that is representing a culture which is different from their own cultural background?”

By means of a qualitative method this current study will determine how the international representatives of the Aruba Tourism Authority categorize themselves and define the meaning of their work while making connections between the organizational culture and the employee's culture. With that, this study will provide new information complementing the existing literature on self-categorization, nevertheless with the ultimate focus on the tourism board employees.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will provide a review of the literature utilized to conduct the current study. The goal is to provide a substantial framework for understanding culture differences and why it is vital to understand the effect of those differences in the working environment. A definition of the study's keywords: "organizational identification, self-categorization and culture values" will be presented. In addition, the keyword's characteristics and consequences for the working environment and the relationship between concepts will be analyzed.

2.1 Organizational Identification

Organizational identification is a psychological attachment to the organization experienced by employees (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). The psychological attachment happens when members of the organization take on the defining characteristics of the organization as defining characteristics of themselves (Dutton et al., 1994). As a result, individuals come to see the organization as part of them and in turn perceive an "oneness" with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The most common way organizational identification is conceptualized is in terms of shared values and goals between the individual and the organization. This is called a values-based identification, where there is a match between organizational values and goals and the individual's values and goals. This type of values-based identification is often used with a related construct; organizational commitment (Gregersen & Black, 1992). This connection is understandable given that organizational identification is a concept which has been subsumed within two popular organizational commitment constructs, which are comprised of the following three components: *identification, willingness to exert effort for the benefit of the organization, and a desire to remain a member of the organization* (Porter et al., 1974; Cook & Wall, 1980).

2.2 Self-categorization

Social Identity theory (SIT) provides another way to conceptualize organizational identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1992; Brown et al., 1986). Self-categorization is a process in the Social Identity Theory (Ran & Duimering, 2007), and has been known to shape identity. Social Identity Theory was first used to describe intergroup behavior and out-group discrimination (Van Dick et al., 2006). Intergroup behavior is recognized when individuals belong to one group and interact collectively or individually with another group in terms of their group identification (Sherif, 1996).

Intergroup discrimination is recognized when there exist a more positive rating of one's own as group compared to other groups and it takes place when people are perceived to be in the same in-group. Self-categorization is a term often used to measure the employee's responsiveness to the organizational culture. The "self" in this theory is conceptualized in social intergroup contexts (Hogg, 2000). When individuals identify with a social group, a "depersonalization of the self" is created. Based on social categories where people believe they belong, people make distinctions between personal and social identities. The social comparisons are made when people differentiate and when others have differences or similarities to the self in a specific context. Interpersonal similarities are another well-known theory which has received significant research attention in sociology. Previous studies have shown that such theory confirms "a tendency to associate with people like yourself" (McPherson et al., 2001). In fact, a connection is more likely to occur between similar rather than dissimilar people. The connection might be based on several motives from geographical proximity to cultural, genetic or even behavioral.

The study of Spataro and Chatman (2005) has focused on the social categorization process created by the combination of the person's demographic similarity or dissimilarity to others in his or her business unit. Also, the study focuses on the organizational culture research showing its emphasis on group-level values which increase the salience of common group memberships. Spataro and Chatman's (2005) hypothesis is that on the basis of similarity to, or difference from, their coworkers, some people may be highly responsive to cultural cues and thus readily adapt to an organization's emphasis on corporate behavior, while others may be less responsive to the cues.

Self- or social categorization consists of depersonalizing the self-concept and integrating the aspects of one's attitudes, feelings and behaviors to the in-group prototype. In-groups stand for a group that distinguishes itself from other groups in terms of behaviors, attitudes and feelings. Self-categorizations are based on social comparisons when a background similarity occurs related to the central comparison dimension. According to Hogg (2000), the self-categorization process helps and is essential to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty reduction contributes to enhancing group behaviors. It is important for people to feel certain about their place in the world both professionally and personally. In addition, it gives existence meaning and provides individuals confidence in how to behave and what to expect from one's environment (Hogg, 2000). When linking uncertainty and self-categorization the theory focuses more on social influence. This means that uncertainty emerges when people discover that they disagree in terms of beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviors with

similar other people. These similar other people are seen as people whom you categorize as the same group members as yourself. Thus, uncertainty will be reduced when similar others agree with people or when these can agree with the similar ones. According to Hogg (2000) uncertainty needs to be subjectively important to motivate people to try to reduce uncertainty. The self-categorization process is ideal for this. The process of self-categorization when reducing uncertainty will lead to the possibility of people joining together and therefore identifying with groups because they have reduced their uncertainty. In situations such as having prototypical disagreement it can be resolved by dis-identifying from the group to identify with a different group, or by redefining the in-group prototype, so that the uncertainty feeling will be “re-established”.

2.2.1 Self-categorization in multinational companies

Empirically there are two main explanations for the generic tendency of group behavior. One of these which relates to this current study is “the theory of self-categorization” which states that people define their social identity through the formation of physiological groups (Monge & Contractor, 2003). This theory focuses on the self-categorization through a comparison of status and social identity. There have been several studies performed on this topic which demonstrates the importance of this matter in an organizational context. The study of Brass et al. (2004) states that similarity is an antecedent for interpersonal network formation making informal business-related connections between multinational company managers rank higher than formal structures. In addition, it shows that there is significant variation in national cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the employees. In the environment of multinational companies there are cultural and linguistic similarities and dissimilarities between organizational members which could lead to the basis of informal connections and disconnections respectively. Thus, it can be inferred that the employee’s cultural characteristics are very important in a multinational corporation due to its consequences. Several studies on multinational companies indicate that a similarity based connection is important because it increases the knowledge sharing between colleagues (Hanssen, 1999; Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). Makela et al. (2007) conducted a study of three different companies and found through theoretical and case data collection two additional similarity factors; the national cultural background and organizational status. National cultural backgrounds are shared beliefs, values, perceptions and practices within the interaction of the employee’s respective countries (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). Similarity of organizational status includes several aspects

such as shared function, the same level or position and similarity of local environment (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Even though this study is based on one company, the participants operate internationally and therefore in different locations. Thus, a comparison could be made between each office's organizational status. This current study assumes that the international representatives categorize themselves in a certain group based on similarities.

2.2.2 Consequences of self-categorization

Contrary to the social identity theory, Lau & Murnighan (1998) propose that strong faultlines may lead to recurring and salient subgroups, which then may become a more likely basis for self-identity and social categorization. Since this study is focused on determining how and why group forming are based on, the theory of "Group Faultlines" matches the research needs. According to Lau & Murnighan (1998), group faultlines are hypothetical dividing lines that may split a group into subgroups based on one or more attributes. These faultlines consist of either demographic (age) and or non-demographic (personal values or personality) characteristics. In contrast with the study of Brass et al. (2004), Lau and Murnighan (1998) also agree with other studies on the impact of similarities. Groups may have many potential faultlines depending on the similarity and salience of group members attributes, each of which may affect the potential for particular subgroupings. Although group members may categorize themselves in many different ways, they predominately have a harder time denying their demographic attributes. It appears that when groups newly form, members use salient demographics to implicitly categorize themselves in subgroups.

There are several consequences as a result of sub groups, one of which could be the limiting of cross communication and reduction of group cohesion. Consequently, demographic dissimilarities may cause less interpersonal interactions and less group cohesiveness. Lau and Murnighan (1998) found that the strength in faultliness may vary as well. The strength depends on three compositional factors: (1) the number of individual attributes apparent to group members, (2) their alignment, and as a consequence (3) the number of potentially homogenous groups. This current study evaluated the impact of the differences in culture between an employee and his or her organization. With this said, the ultimate focus is on finding similarities and how easy or difficult identification with these similarities are accomplished in terms of self-categorization within the company. Based on the literature review one would predict that self-categorizing one in a multinational company is not easy to describe.

2.3 Culture Values

When it comes to entities that employ expatriates such as tourism bureaus and embassies, the characteristics of an organizational culture are different and more complex than these entities in other types of industries. As Monin and Belhoste (2013) demonstrated on the basis of a qualitative research on three kinds of organizations – multinational corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises and start-up companies, there are three perspectives on differences in a cross-cultural context. The study focused on determining if people refer to national cultural differences as cross-cultural as scholars expect them to or not (Chen et al., 2009). Therefore, the study identified three perspective differences in international settings: The national dissonance perspective, the social differentiation perspective, and the functional distinction perspective. Each of these perspective differences represents the main categorization of nationality, status and function.

In addition, these perspectives have a main focus on values, attitudes and behaviors and knowledge and expertise. National dissonances organizations are characterized by the cross-cultural differences which have an influence, followed by a consequence for an organization. They are objectively salient and subjectively relevant and people organize their working worlds along nationality-based lines (Monin & Belhoste, 2013). Under these circumstances, people interpret their international experience by defining groups based on nationalities or territorial identities of their members. The functional dissonance is a perspective in which individuals interpret their international experiences and define groups based on people's functions within the company. The social differentiation perspective is when individuals primarily perceive differences among employees and define groups based on the status of others in the company. This implies that in the functional and social perspectives the cross cultural differences common in multinational companies do not make a difference. The study of Monin and Belhoste (2013) also illustrates why people have different perspectives, and it seems that the international experience and country experience influences the way some people adopt certain perspective.

Examining differences and similarities within groups are essential for an organization as these differences and similarities are found on many, or on all levels, within an organization. Previous researchers have encountered difficulties in conceptualizing and studying these differences and similarities effectively (Harrison & Klein, 2007). According to Litvin (1997), differences are biologically or psychologically determined due to an outcome of socialization within a particular group. This could apply also within a particular group at work such as between

colleagues. However, due to globalization and the demands of multinational companies, the research efforts have grown in cross-cultural studies, which are mostly about differences in nationalities.

The importance of analyzing the organizational culture for this particular study results from the quest to know how the chosen organization's culture (ATA) integrates with the employee's own cultural background since this study is based on different cultures (Europe, Latin, American). Therefore, this current study assumes that the international representatives of the ATA experience groups within the organization based on nationalities.

2.3.1 Consequences of culture values diversity

The culture in which individuals are raised also influences the way individuals communicate in terms of individualistic and collectivistic tendencies (Gudykunst & Ting-Tooney, 1988). These tendencies have a direct effect on communication because it affects the norms and rules that guide behavior in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. In addition, it also influences individual factors such as the way individuals perceive themselves (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Therefore, cultural individualistic and collectivistic tendencies have both a direct effect on communication behavior and indirect effect on communication behavior that is mediated through self-construal and values (Gudykunst & Ting-Tooney, 1988). According to Ball-Rokeach et al. (1984) values are the central core to the individual's personality which have a direct effect on behavior. They argue that values are the major component of the personality that helps individuals maintain and enhance their self-esteem. According to Schwartz (1990) individuals hold both individualistic and collectivistic values and they are not necessarily in conflict.

When it comes to the meaning of work in the life of individuals who are influenced by prevailing cultural value priorities there are several things to take into consideration (Schwartz, 1999). The study of "A theory of cultural values and some implications of work" which was based on 44 national cultures, analyzes and compares different types of cultural values to find compatibility or confliction with work centrality. Schwartz (1999) states that for one to understand how cultural values influence the meanings that members of different societies attribute to work, one needs to focus on the culture-level value dimensions rather than individual-level dimensions. Cultural values represent the implicitly or explicitly shared ideas about what is good, right and desirable in a society (Williams, 1970).

In contrast, work values reflect the goals or rewards people seek through their work. The study of Schwartz (1999) illustrates four types of work values found within

their respondents. The work values identified were intrinsic (personal growth, autonomy, interest and creativity), extrinsic (pay and security), social (contact with people and contribution to society) and power (prestige, authority, influence).

2.3.2 Comparing national cultures

An important cultural difference area that has received much empirical attention is the individualism and collectivism area (Cox and Blake, 1991). The difference between these two areas is due to the collectivistic culture focusing on the needs and goals of the group, social norms and duty, shared beliefs and overall cooperation with group members (Triandis, 2001). Thus, collectivists are more likely to sacrifice their own personal interests for the fulfillment of the group's goals. According to the theoretical analysis of Triandis (2001) in collectivistic cultures the individual's relationship to the in-group is mostly stable even when the in-group demands the individual's participation. In contrast, individualists disconnect from those in-groups that are considered too demanding and in turn create new in-groups. As a result stands that the in-group demands on individual contributions are highly segmented in an individualistic culture, meaning that they are only for a certain moment or of a certain type. This differs in collectivistic culture where the demands are diffuse.

When it comes to comparing the Latin, European and North American cultures there is no specific research available. However, there are some cross-cultural studies which demonstrate that northern and western Europeans and North Americans (Hofstede, 1980) tend to be individualists and that Asians, Latins and most east and west Africans tend to be collectivists (Hofstede, 1980). The study of Diaz-Guerrero (1984) found that collectivists emphasize the value of cooperation, whereas individualists emphasize competition. The study of Wagner and Moch (1986) found that collectivists tend to perform jobs that require teamwork and individualists tend to perform more independent tasks. Also the study of Schwartz (1999) illustrates some connections between the Latin, European and North American cultures and work values, which provides an indication of which work values are important for each culture.

In summary, according to Schwartz (1999) the group of Latin America belongs to the Egalitarianism culture value type. The USA group could be a mix of Mastery and Affective Autonomy culture value type. The west Europe group most likely belongs to the Intellectual Autonomy culture value type. The country of Italy could be a mix of Egalitarianism and Harmony culture value type.

According to Schwartz (1999) it is ideal to understand the type of work values, especially for managers in order to motivate workers more effectively and to see if

they are compatible with the prevailing cultural emphasis. For example, Schwartz (1999) provides a table which illustrates that the pursuit of power is likely to be more acceptable in cultures where Hierarchy and Mastery culture values are emphasized (applicable for Americans, according to Schwartz's theory). This information could be helpful in providing an indication of how an employee's work values are linked to their cultural background (refer to page 44 for table on work values compatibility). Moreover, it helps researchers to understand why particular types of work values are emphasized or downplayed in specific cultures. Furthermore, no empirical studies have been done on the Aruban culture. Since Aruba is a multicultural island, there might be a mix of both individualist and collectivist cultures. Although, since Aruba has more of a Latin influence than American, Aruba might lean towards the collectivistic culture.

Therefore, the following study will show the differences between the Latin, European and North American cultures and how each function in terms of dealing with other cultures. Considering that it is important to work with passion for the Aruba brand, it is logical that it might be beneficial to have a collectivist's team working. Also the communication between multinational employees is very important since the offices are spread all over the globe. Therefore, it is important to explore whether the type of culture influences the way they communicate and in turn the way they feel and categorize themselves within the company.

Furthering upon the study of Gregersen and Black (1992) which reports that organizational identification depends on shared values and goals between the organization and individual, cultural background may affect this by being one of the ingredients in values and goals. Demographic attributes also tend to be used as a basis for social categorization because demographically similar people are likely to share similar backgrounds and experiences. As a result, demographic attributes are often assumed to be associated with underlying attributes, such as values, cognitive styles, or past experience. This implies that people will be more likely to use demographic attributes as social categories in a situation where they are demographically different from others and when that situation has typically not been characterized by demographic heterogeneity in the past. Therefore, the cultural background, which is part of the values that create organizational identification, will be investigated in this current study.

3 METHODS

For this study a qualitative method was chosen and therefore a number of in-depth interviews were taken. The aim of the study was to examine how cultural differences between an employee and the organization the employee works for may influence his or her self-categorization and identification with this organization.

In- depth interviews were found well suited for this study for several reasons. Primarily, due to the fact that the aim of the research was to explore in a certain context in order to provide explanation on a certain topic. Moreover, to explore if cultural background differences causes difficulties in terms of organizational identification within an organization. In line with the research aim, this study was directed towards the international Aruba Tourism Authority representatives who are considered a specific target group due to having cultural background differences between organization and employees. Notwithstanding of the cultural background differences, this study's sample was a relatively small sample which is also why a qualitative approach is suitable. In addition, an interview offers sufficient room in which an individual can express his or her opinion on the topic that is being explored. Kawulich (2005) suggests that interviews familiarize researchers with an organization and its people in ways than no other data collection technique can. Furthermore, open-ended questions are more tolerated during personal interviews due to the belief that respondents may be more comfortable in expressing themselves orally instead of having to provide the data in writing. In addition, open-ended questions provide the researcher the opportunity to get a more detailed analysis of the participant's responses compared to closed questions. This interview method together with Easterby-Smith, Thrope and Lowe (1991) probing-technique enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the specific needs, problems and description on cultural background differences between the organization and its employees.

3.1 Organization and Participant selection

For the purpose of this research a number of nineteen interviews were taken under the regional representatives of the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA). As can be understood from its name, the ATA is the local authority with respect to the development and execution of policies related to the tourism industry. To do so in an effective manner, this organization fosters relationship with different stakeholders with the objective to promote and sell Aruba as the perfect vacation destination. The selection of this organization was a decision based mostly for the convenience of the researcher's based location and due to researcher's personal networking (cultural

background similarities) to receive permission to conduct the study within the organization.

The tourism industry has been a major player in the economic development of Aruba and for the past seven years it was the only economic pillar of the island. With the “booming” of tourism throughout the years, the work of the ATA has become much more demanding resulting in a strategic move by the government to privatize this organization, giving it much more room to pursue effective management of the tourism industry. The headquarters of the ATA is located in Oranjestad and is led by a management team of ten members. The ATA has different offices in Aruba’s major markets. It has an office in the Netherlands directed to the entire European market, it has representation in New York (for the North American market) and an office in Venezuela directed towards the Latin American market. ATA currently employs more than fifty employees, excluding “the regional representatives” which are independent companies with which the ATA has a contractual relationship. Some of these independent companies provide services to only the account Aruba, while others represent other destinations that are not considered as a competitor to the island. The independent companies (representatives) work as official ATA offices in their respective markets. In addition to the strategic alliance with the independent representatives, the ATA has contractual relationships with media agencies that provide digital marketing services. These media agencies are selected by market and work on a daily basis with the representatives of that specific market.

The sample of this study consisted of ATA staff members ($n=8$), individuals of a number of independent representatives ($n=4$) and service providers ($n=7$). Please note that in this report, the participants will be referred as either ATA-officials ($n=8$) or independent company ($n=11$). Since the purpose of this research was to describe the individuals’ self-categorization in an organization that has a different cultural background, the cultural background of an individual was the main criterion for selection. However, the type of culture on itself was not a criteria: only being non-Aruban was the main criteria. The ATA provided an emailing list including all their international stakeholders. The list was not randomly selected; it specifically included the ATA’s international stakeholders. The list consisted of key managers in the ATA’s international offices and independent companies, who then referred the researcher to other Non-Arubans office members. The sample of this study consisted of 13 international representatives provided by ATA and eleven referred contacts, coming to a total of nineteen international representatives. Important to state is that only three participants could have not been included to the study sample due to being Aruban. These three participants are Aruban directors for the international

offices. Thus the total of nineteen participants is a comparable amount to the total number of international stakeholders of the ATA. Table 1 illustrates the demographical characteristics of the participants of this study.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Position	Gender	Cultural background	Years of working experience	Respondent number
ATA employee	Female	Brazil-Latin	6 years	3
ATA employee	Female	Venezuelan-Latin	5 years	12
ATA employee	Female	Uk -Europe	13 years	14
ATA employee	Female	Sweden-Europe	2 years	15
ATA employee	Female	Holland-Europe	3,5 months	16
ATA employee	Female	New England –North America	19 years	17
ATA employee	Female	Canada-North America	16 years	18
ATA employee	Female	Canada-North America	18 years	19
Independent company	Female	Chile-Latin	2 months	1
Independent company	Female	Colombian-Latin	7 months	2
Independent company	Male	Chile-Latin	12 years	4
Independent company	Female	Chile-Latin	3 years	5
Independent company	Male	Brazil-Latin	3 years	6
Independent company	Female	Colombian-Latin	17 years	7
Independent company	Female	Colombian-Latin	20 years	8
Independent company	Female	Colombian-Latin	3,5 years	9
Independent company	Female	Colombian-Latin	1 year	10
Independent company	Female	Colombian-Latin	2 years	11
Independent company	Female	Italy-Europe	3 years	13

3.2 Data Collection

To collect the data, the participants were approached by email through the ATA-office. Through this email invite, participants were given an introduction by the researcher with respect to the purpose of the research and estimation on how much time the interview will cost. The participant's time-schedule was crucial for the coordination of the interviews since all participants were based off the island. Therefore an easy and convenient approach was required to establish communication over distance. According to the study of Sullivan (2012) communication programs such as Skype are ideal to conduct face-to face interactions over distance. Sullivan (2012) suggested that just as an interviewee in-person can portray a rosier picture of their life, an Internet interviewee may have a similar result. Sullivan (2012) also suggests that due to our dependence on technology nowadays, interactions through the internet might be close in alignment with the biases that in-person interactions may deliver. So in terms of reliability

internet interactions may not differ much to that of personal interviews. Consequently, interviews were taken using Skype and for the afore-mentioned reason was found sufficiently reliable. Most of the interviews ($n=14$) were taken using the Skype program and the data was recorded in written form. It should be noted that a few interviews were taken in person in Colombia. These face-to-face interviews were conducted in a private setting where only the interviewer and interviewee were present and the data was recorded in written form ($n=5$). During and at the end of the interviews the researcher would provide a summary of the participant's responses with the objective to assure that the information was understood and recorded correctly.

The interviews were semi-structured since there were specific topics for which data was collected asking the same questions, but required probing by the researcher and argumentation by the interviewee. The aim was to find out where the cultural background differences would play a role and what the perceived consequences would be. The duration of the interviews was between 45 to 50 minutes. Each topic during the interviews was handled with the probing technique, using the basic probe, the explanatory probe, the focused probe and the mirroring and reflecting technique (Easterby-Smith, Thrope, & Lowe, 1991). These different techniques ensured the responses reliability by finding out more detail to help understand the statements made by the participants. The idea was to find out through all these different questions where and why the cultural background differences play a role.

Explanation topics. As an ice-breaker and with the objective to make the participants feel comfortable, each individual was asked to state their responsibilities. Since the aim of the research was to inquire about the effect the differences in cultural background could have on the tasks to be performed, questions on the communication and office location distance were also asked. Questions on the field of communication are important because language can be a barrier to effective communication, as is the differences in organizational culture and cultural background of the individual. Since the head office is located in Aruba and this study's sample consisted of participants outside Aruba, questions related to time and distance were asked, to find out if this affects the participant's job duties.

Participants were asked if they feel identified with the organization and if they would not, if their cultural background (nationality) would be a reason thereto. This argument was also applicable to the question about the positioning of themselves in a certain group within the organization. The aim was to find out if participants experience groups within the organization and based on what type of characteristics

these groups are formed, specifically if it is on cultural backgrounds. Questions on work meaning and role meaning were also incorporated in the interviews to find out how participants feel about the organization and their relation and position therewith. Finding out on how the participants would give meaning to their work and how they would give their role meaning would possibly help the researcher to understand the other responses and possibly find relations between responses. For instance, finding out on how the participants give meaning to their work illustrates the participant's belongingness to the organization as well. Direct questions on having difficulties because of the differences in culture with the organization were also asked, to find out if the researcher's assumption is applicable in the context of tourism board employees. A great part of the interview questions scheme was based on previous studies (please refer to page 45 for the interview scheme).

For instance, questions on organizational identification were derived from the study of Ashforth and Mael (1989). Questions on work meaning were derived from the study of Rosso et al. (2010). Questions on self-categorization were derived from the Social Identity theory (Van Dick et al., 1996). Other interview questions were designed by the researcher in order to compare the responses and find relationships amongst the responses to create a conclusion and answer the research question. Table 2 presents a summary of the topics covered during the interviews with an indication of the relevant questions asked.

Table 2

Interview topics

Topic	Sample question
Responsibilities	<i>You are currently representing an international company. What is it that you do for the company?</i>
Communication	<i>Could you describe how decisions are being made within the company? How are these being communicated to you?</i>
Time and distance	<i>Does the time difference and distance with Aruba influence your job activities? If yes please explain if it's in a positive or negative way?</i>
Self-categorization	<i>Suppose you're at a party. Someone asks you what kind of job you have. What do you tell then?</i>
Identification	<i>Would you say you can identify yourself with the organization you are working for?</i>
In-out groups	<i>An organization is sometimes known to have in-groups and out-groups. With in- groups is meant people who share same values, culture background, views etc. And out-groups are the people who do not belong to this group, or who feel excluded at certain level from the in-groups. Would you consider the organization has in- and out-groups?</i>
Cultural background differences	<i>Do people ever ask you if it's difficult to work for a country that you barely know or you are not from?</i>
Work meaning	<i>What makes your work important or meaningful?</i>
Role meaning	<i>Would you call yourself an Aruban expert? Or a destination expert? Or what type of expert?</i>

3.3 Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim leading to 116 transcribed pages. Pseudonyms were used at all times to secure anonymity in the research. The quality of the research is ensured by the participant's feedback given on the responses. The researcher would always recap and confirm the participant's responses prior to recording their answers. The data trustworthiness is therefore secure by the participant's own feedback. The data was analyzed by applying Shanon and Hseih (2005) multi-step content-analytical procedure consisting of four steps. First, the interviews were read multiple times and during the reading notes were made. These notes consisted of themes that were formed based on the participant's responses.

Second, the researcher started with the creation of the code book. The data was analyzed by applying both "in-vivo" codes which is using the participants' terminology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and by applying theoretical concepts (using codes coming from literature). In the process of "in-vivo" coding, the concepts emerged from the raw data and later grouped into conceptual categories. The goal was to build a descriptive, multi-dimensional preliminary framework for later analysis. Due to being built directly from the raw data, the process itself ensures the validity of the work (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). To analyze the data in a systematic way, Atlas.ti software was used for tracking code creation. A deductive thematic analysis was conducted in order to find similarities and or differences amongst responses coming from theoretical themes from the predetermined theoretical framework in relation to the research question. The deductive themes in this study were "Work meaning", "Role meaning", "Self-categorization", "Communication" and "Organizational culture".

Third, the codebook was given to an independent coder who was not involved in the previous stages of the coding. The independent coder analyzed all the themes and subcategories and provided feedback on the codebook in terms of evaluating the merging of certain themes.

Fourth, after reviewing the feedback, the researcher made some adjustments and created the final code book. These adjustments consisted of merging some themes and or subcategories that provided similar information.

In this stage the researcher conducted an inductive approach by cutting down all themes to the most important findings of the study. The goal was to create themes that are strongly linked to the data since they emerge from it. In this case the actual data itself is used to derive the structure of the analysis. As a result, in relation to the research aim, the researcher identified three main themes: Self categorization, Identification and Culture Comparison. Themes such as Communication and Role expert were not taken into consideration since cultural background differences did

not affect these responses. A major portion of the theme work meaning was merged with identification because of having similar findings within the responses, such as social motives, perceived external prestige (recognition), business growth (future) and trust. Some subcategories in work meaning such as Loyalty, responsibility and security were not taken in consideration because of not having found the cultural background characteristics amongst the responses. As a result the theme of organizational identification was emerged in three subcategories: "Identification with ATA", "Identification with Aruba" and "Identification with independent company".

The themes organizational culture and organizational issues were merged and formed culture comparison. Culture comparison stands for how participants view the cultural background differences between them and the organization. Therefore, under culture comparison sub categories were formed which represents how participants view the culture differences either in a positive or negative way. For example, a negative topic this current study presents are the work ethics differences the participants feel. This theme was merged into the negative sub category of culture comparison as bureaucracy. In self-categorization the responses on out-group positioning were labelled as discrimination since all the responses consisted of some sort of discrimination. The responses of in-group ($n=3$) and no in –outgroup ($n=11$) were merged since the responses were similar. The following table 3 presents the final codebook illustrating the final creating of the merged themes.

Table 3*Final codebook*

Theme	Subcategories	Statements
Identification	Identification with Aruba	I have a passion and love for the island and the people of Aruba after working with and for the destination for so long. Being out in the field, talking with others at tradeshows, presentations or in trainings about Aruba and seeing interest and excitement back on their faces is priceless.
	Identification with ATA	A great solid support both from the company and ATA. I do feel I receive great support from ATA, when during meetings and from the other countries. There is a nice work sphere.
	Identification with independent company	I work for ID digital Colombia, this is my boss. My indirect boss is Aruba, in this case director Latin America for ATA
Self-categorization	No in-outgroups	Don't believe there are groups. We all work very hard for Aruba and we have a responsibility. All working for same goal and I believe we lose our nationality to focus on the job and Aruba
	Out-group	I feel we have some excellent people working for us yet we keep hiring more staff and outside consultant companies. We could better utilize each employee's strengths.
Culture comparison	Positive	It is easier to communicate because of the Arubans knowledge on languages. So communication is not a problem.
	Negative	The administration ways of doing stuff that interrupts the process within the organization. There is a lot of internal paperwork.

3.4 Researcher's position

The researcher understands and can relate to a certain extend with most of the cultures in this study (Aruban and Latin) due to her family constellation and understands the effects of organizational culture on effectiveness and found it interesting to investigate how the cultural differences can be aligned to improve the effectiveness of a whole industry.

The participants of this study were completely unknown to the researcher. On one hand, the researcher has a certain prior knowledge an outsider (or non- Aruban) would not have, and understands or can relate in some discussion points perfectly. Also because of the researcher being half Latin, the communication during the intern and research in terms of language was easily accomplished. This could mean and lead to possible data bias. However, on the other hand, the researcher was not familiar with the ATA's international work. Thus the researcher's cultural background

helped the researcher to understand certain things better, but everything in general about the research was new for the researcher. At the beginning of the interview the researcher gave a small introduction on her master thesis.

The researcher emphasized that the interviews are for her degree's purpose and not intended as a project for ATA. The researcher feels that this helped the participants to be more open and relaxed in answering the questions. Thus, the data collection was handled with the utmost care, to maintain and keep an objective view.

Moreover, the questions of the interview scheme were general questions on self-categorization in terms of cultural backgrounds. Even though the focus was not on finding examples of scenarios within the organization, at times specific examples were asked to find out why certain answers were given. This made the researcher understand the responses in a better way due to the "vivid" examples. The researcher gave the participant the chance to provide personal information, for example " How did you start working with the Aruba account? ", this with the intention of making the interviewee feel more casual and comfortable to continue with the rest of the questions. This helped the researcher in finding similarities amongst the participants and also to find out about factors that influence certain topics. Ultimately, next to the interviews, the researcher's position as an intern in Colombia was ideal to experience the difference in cultural backgrounds in terms of communication and execution of work. This helped the researcher to better understand the participant's position by having a taste of being in the "participant's own shoes" in a way.

4 RESULTS

Participants diverged in their ways of how they identify themselves with the home organization. Interestingly, it appears that the Americans ($n=3$) are the unsatisfied group. In terms of identification, the Americans feel unappreciated by the home organization. As a result, the Americans do not identify with the home organization but would rather state they “Identify with the product Aruba”. In general, the results illustrates that there is a distinction made between the organization and the product in terms of identification. An example of such response; *“There are different views to my job. I could identify with my colleagues, but if I think on managers or directors I would say no. With the Aruba account I could say yes, because I love talking about Aruba, and I have great relationship with my clients”- Respondent 11.*

In addition, the Americans showed that they feel less important than the Latins because they believe that the home organization is paying more attention to the Latin market, in terms of distribution of the budget. In contrast, the Europeans ($n=4$) were not negative about the home organization; amongst their responses there was identification with the home organization. A European participant clarified this by stating: *“With ATA I feel partly identified, not on paper. But the trust in me definitely makes me feel part of the organization, meaning both Aruba and head office for Europe”- Respondent 14.*

In general, the Latins ($n=12$) were also satisfied with the home organization and some even reported identification with the home organization (ATA). As a Latin participant would clarify this by stating: *“I identify myself with ATA, I am very pleased and happy to work here and I see possibilities for me to grow. I have more responsibilities now so there is trust between us. I consider ATA to be as a family. When I visit Aruba in my free time, I hang out with colleagues there” – Respondent 12.*

However, the majority of the research sample states to identify with the product Aruba rather than the home organization. A response of a Latin participant; *“I believe you need to have certain characteristics with the brand or with the tourist. I personally identify with both, because on one hand I need to talk and convince tourists and in this way I identify. I have to say I identify more with Aruba than with ATA” – Respondent 2.*

4.1 Groups of identification

During the interview the researcher identified three different ways the participants identify themselves. (1) Participants *identify themselves with ATA*, (2) Participants *identify themselves with Aruba* or (3) Participants *identify themselves with the independent company*. This last category comprises all the agencies and independent companies that work for the account “Aruba”, based on contractual agreements.

4.1.1 Motives for “Identification with Aruba”

Most participants ($n=10$) claim that they identify with Aruba. During the interviews, participants made a distinction between the organization and the “product” (Aruba). There are several reasons why the participants make this distinction.

Position. One of the reasons for this distinction is because of the participant’s position within the organization (independent or official employee). For instance, an independent representative will most likely identify with the product rather than the organization because he or she is not an official ATA employee. For instance, the American representatives make this distinction based on the way the Aruban Team handles the American market. This is expressed during the interviews affirming that the Aruban team does not give the Americans the trust or the freedom to create and execute plans for their own market. According to the Americans, the Aruban team always creates market plans without consulting them. This is why the Americans feel frustrated.

Social. Some participants reported that based on the relationships made with the ATA’s employees they feel identified with Aruba. The argumentation for this is that the international representatives whether they are official or non-official ATA employees are always in contact with Arubans (home organization). Participants feel identified with Aruba because of the welcoming and friendliness of the Aruban staff. This result shows similarities to what is called “social motives” in Schwartz’s (1999) study which states “social motives are one of the four types of work values people seek through their work”. Social values are based on the contact with people and contribution to society. Interestingly, in this group of identification some participants would say they feel identified with ATA. However, their explanation is based on attributes that the island or its people have to offer. For example participants would state that due to the Arubans expertise on four languages the communication has been easy and therefore also the identification process.

Perceived external image. Some participants reported that because of working and or representing a destination such as Aruba, makes them feel proud.

Participants state that when being in a social setting they feel proud to mention they represent Aruba. This shows that participants identify themselves on perceived external prestige they receive due to the product's attributes, rather than the organization itself.

Future. Additionally, participants reported how they believe in the future growth of the product (Aruba), giving them more opportunities and motivation in their working field. Participants reported that the bright future of the account Aruba stimulates them. This in turn resulted in identification with the product (Aruba). The following table 4 represents the motives for the participant's identification with the product (Aruba).

Table 4

Results for the group of participants who identify with Aruba

Motives	Respondent (n=10)	Sample comments
Position	Respondent 8	"I feel identified with Aruba, I love Aruba and I am attached to it. With the organization I mostly feel excluded especially after the transition of the company"
Social	Respondent 5	"I help other new representatives as well for example Argentina, so I believe I am contributing to all the markets and all in all to Aruba's well-being and growth. In return I get great compliments and we as Peru and Chile's representatives are an example during ATA's presentations and meeting. That makes me very proud"
Perceived external prestige	Respondent 6	"I like to work, working already fascinates me. Aruba is an account that makes me proud and I feel thankful to be part of Aruba. I do feel like an Aruban because I am in permanent contact with and talk about Aruba all the time. I feel part of ATA and feel like a family. When I visit Aruba I feel at home"
Future	Respondent 1	"It is a satisfying job because you are working for a growing market. I always worked for tourism and I have a Caribbean background. I always liked and believed in Aruba and now that I get to work closely with the account it just fascinates me"

4.1.2 Motives for "Identification with ATA"

Trust. The second group (n=5) is formed by the participants who identify with the home organization; ATA. These participants are not necessarily the official ATA employees. However, they are mostly employees of an independent company working with the account Aruba as their only client. The participants feel identified with the way they work with the ATA Team, and also how the team welcomes them

when visiting Aruba. Participants feel proud to work with an account that grants them the trust and opportunity to work independently within their market. The account ATA and Aruba is very important to these independent companies because the account Aruba had been the initiative to open up and start the independent company. For example, there are participants who used to work in travel agencies and it is here where they met and indirectly work with ATA. Then the ATA negotiated with these participants to become their representation on the perspective market. In order to achieve this, the participant needed then to open up his or her own company to provide representation services to the ATA. Therefore, some participants will state they identify with the ATA. An example of this identification with ATA stated by a participant from an independent company for the markets Chile and Brazil: *"I do feel partly identified and part of the team (ATA). I feel appreciated, and in Chile people recognize me as Aruba"* – Respondent 4.

4.1.3 Motives for "Identification with independent company"

The rest of the participants ($n=4$) whom answered that they identified with the independent company mostly reported this because this is the organization which they have a contractual agreement with. As a participant reported *" I identify with Fedia representations, because this is the organization who pays me "*- Respondent 9. As a consequence, the participants identify themselves based on a formal contract or agreement.

Conversely, an agency that holds different accounts and offers other services than representation of a destination would also state to identify with the independent company. This implies that the participant cannot elaborate much on his or her identification within the home organization and or with the account Aruba. An example of an participant response: *"I can not only identify with ATA even if 80% of the time I work with Aruba, I have other accounts as well"*- Respondent 13.

4.2 Self-categorization

Employees have different ways of self-categorizing themselves within an organization. This study explored how participants categorize themselves in terms of in or out groups. Most of the participants ($n=11$) state to have not experience any groups within the organization (neither in nor out groups). In contrast, only a few participants experienced to be part of the "in-group". With "in-group" is meant when participants would experience groups and in this case in-group stands for being part of the organization (ATA). This outcome was to be expected after analyzing how the participants identify themselves which is with Aruba rather than with the organization.

Subsequently, one would believe that for a participant to experience to be part of the in-group it must be someone who would have reported to identify with the organization as well.

4.2.1 “No in- and out-groups”

When reviewing the results, it is difficult to state and give an estimate on the group categorization responses. Most of the participants ($n=11$) reported that they do not experience groups within the organization.

Equal goals. Participants often stated to have “a demanding job” during the interview. This is a possible explanation why the participants do not have the time to notice or experience that there are groups within the organization. Next to “demanding job” participants reported that they feel in line with the organization due to having equal goals. In addition, participants refer to “equal goals” as not having the focus or need for group forming within the organization. An example of a participant’s response: *“I don’t think there are groups, it is a very united group and you feel like one group because you receive support at all times”- Respondent 2.*

4.2.2 Feeling part of the “out-group”

Discrimination. The group of the participants ($n=5$) whom reported that they experience being part of the “out-group” reported this for several reasons. The interviews showed that based on their job position, participants would experience being part of the out-group. Mostly agencies and independent companies reported experiencing being part of the out-group. This is because of their external position compared to the official ATA employees or stakeholders. Other participants experience being part of the out-group based on the market they work for. Hence, the participants have different target markets. One participant stated *“I believe the in-group is ATA Aruba and outgroups are the regional offices. Each market sees Aruba differently; it is a different target group, for different vacation time or reasoning” – Respondent 18.*

Conversely, participants reported lack of motivation and feelings of discrimination. The participant’s way of feeling excluded or discriminated influence their view on the out-group positioning. This finding supports the study of Abrams et al. (1990) which reports that people define their membership, as part of the larger group or as part of the sub group and this can seriously influence group processes. There are different reasons the participants reported which influences the way they feel discriminated. Participants who have been working for over 20 years with the company have been through several organizational phases-changes including the

transition from official ATA office to becoming an independent office. These participants are the ones who mostly experience the out-group positioning. Because these participants compare their position to how it was before, and therefore feel the changes now as not being an “official ATA” employee. This form of experiencing outgroups shows similarities to the study of Mcpherson et al. (2001) which illustrates how people define their social identity based on the formation of physiological groups. In this particular study it is the international stakeholder position versus the official ATA employee’s position. As one participant stated: *“The in-group are the official employees and the out-group are the regional offices”- Respondent 14.*

In addition, participants reported that most of the work is being duplicated and this in turn makes them feel they “over-work” at times. The participants also reported a “lack of sharing information”. For example in the Latin market the ATA works with different media agencies. At times these media agencies receive one project that all of the agencies need to conduct and later give a presentation to ATA. At the end of these presentations a winner is selected for that certain project. Thus, participants reported that this makes them feel they over work because there are different people working on the same project at the same time frame. This in turn also causes uncertainties on the participant’s organizational position and also how the organization works, which affects the experiencing of the out-group.

The participants also reported the need to be more up-to-date with the product. It appears that mostly agencies reported this since they need to be constantly writing about the island. It was also noticeable that some participants attend more yearly meetings than others; however the actual visit to the island is a need amongst all participants. This could be seen as the employees or stakeholders education needs. In turn this also affects the way the participants feel discriminated. The overall reasoning for the participants to feel part of the “out-group” has to do with the feelings of being left out or non-appreciated. Interestingly, being an official ATA employee or not does not influence the participant’s experiencing being part of the out group. That is to say that the responses for out-groups consist of both official ATA employees and independent companies.

Nonetheless, when comparing the answers to the identification groups it appears that the participants who identify with Aruba are mostly the ones who say they experience being part of the out-group. This shows why they would not “Identify with the ATA” or “Identify with the independent company”. Specifically, they position themselves in the out-group, which means not part of the organization. Even though the reasons behind “Identifying with Aruba” and “Out-group positioning” do not match completely, there is a visible relation between the identification and out-group

positioning. Which means that because of not identifying as part of the organization but rather with the product (Aruba) the participant will most likely report to have experienced being part of the outgroup. The following table 5 presents the participant's motives for experiencing no groups and or out-groups within the organization.

Table 5

Results of self-categorization "No in-out groups" and "Out-groups"

Category	Motives	Participant	Sample comments
No In-Out Groups (n=11)	Equal Goals	Respondent 5	"I don't believe there are groups. We all work very hard for Aruba and we have a responsibility. All working for the same goal and I believe we lose our nationality to focus on the job and Aruba"
		Respondent 6	"Honestly I don't think there is time to think or make groups. The team of Aruba consists of people very friendly and healthy. I cannot see in-groups or out-groups. One time they asked me for a Dutch passport, I guess I really fit in"
Out-groups (n=5)	Discrimination	Respondent 19	We could better utilize each employee's strengths. Motivation is our biggest weakness. On island they are not used to having to be motivated as in the past, and I have not seen it change yet, once you are hired (as a Government employee), you cannot be fired. What motivates you? Since HQ never had to worry about motivation, it is not addressed in other areas where employees are on term contract and guaranteed the position. Plus it shows in your work. If you are motivated or feel appreciated, you work twice as hard without being asked"

The remaining three participants who reported to experience being part of the "in-group" gave mixed responses. These responses consisted of how the participants feel when they are around Arubans and also about the product's attributes. This shows how the participants always refer to what the product (Aruba) that they work for, offers to them. An example of an "in-group" response: *I would say the in-group, the only thing that is really different is my cultural background. But, as people, we have many common core values, beliefs, and how we look at life. The way I look at it we are all in this together and we just have to make it work. The Aruban people are so warm and caring and kind and genuine it is easy to learn and know their culture and to be able to say you are proud to work for this wonderful island"- Respondent 17.*

4.3 Culture comparison between employee and organization

According to the participants, the organizational culture can be either seen in a negative or positive way or even seen as no different compared to the participant's cultural background. Most of the participants ($n=16$) answered that the culture difference is seen in a positive way. Participants feel that the culture differences bring no difficulty in their daily activities. This is considered as positive, since the aim of the question was to find out if the culture differences affect their daily work activities in a negative way.

The culture comparison can be seen as a moderator to the self-categorization process and the identification process. Since majority of the participants encounter no difficulties with the Aruban culture and consider the differences in a positive way it implies that this influences why participants feel identified with the product (Aruba) and do not experience groups within the organization. During the interviews, the participants were asked if they feel there are groups within the organization based on culture backgrounds as one of the factors; the majority answered they do not experience groups. This implies that the cultural background difference do not affect the self-categorization process of the participants. An example of a participant's response: "*Cultural background differences is not something negative. I think we are similar to Aruban, meaning we are happy and relaxed as well, so it is something good.*" - Respondent 13.

Positive. Participants who identify with Aruba are the ones who view the organizational culture in a positive way. These participants refer to the differences either as a necessity or as a similarity when it comes to comparing with their own cultural background. With necessity is meant that because of operating in international markets, international representatives and therefore different cultural backgrounds are a must. Another positive scenario is that the Aruban culture (head office) is very family oriented referring to the organization understands when an employee or stakeholder is going through personal issues. Some others reported similarities in language and personality. This implies that in terms of communication the culture differences do not have a negative influence. According to the study of Brass et al. (2004) cultural and linguistic similarity or dissimilarity between organizational members could lead to the basis of informal connections or disconnections. Thus, the compatibility that the participants reported between the Aruban culture and their own culture leads to a positive connection between the employee and the organization.

Interestingly, the participants who view the culture differences positively are the ones who reported to identify with Aruba as well. This implies that the participants

view the culture differences between their own and the organizations in such a positive way that they feel identified with this.

Bureaucracy. The remaining participants ($n=3$) see the culture difference in a negative way. The reason behind this was mostly about the perceived differences in work ethics. The Aruba Tourism Authority has several procedures to follow and so do their international stakeholders. For example, before a project gets approved the decision depends on several managers and this implies a lot of waiting in order for the international stakeholders to execute any type of plan. This procedure is either seen as a company weakness, or as the “Aruban” organizational culture. Some participants would see this as something that you need to get used to, while others would say it delays the work, and at times it could be frustrating.

Uncertainties. In addition, the cultural background differences are categorized as negative because of the organizational uncertainties the participant feels. These uncertainties are mostly about the people’s position within the organization. The Aruba Tourism Authority head office has several “title positions” which seems similar to one another and therefore causing uncertainties for the international stakeholders. Interestingly, this group consists of participants who identify themselves either with the independent company or with ATA. Thus, this implies that because of viewing or having difficulties with the culture Aruba, the participant (s) would not identify with the island (product).

Education needs. Another interesting theme that appears in most interviews is the fact of not being in the position to visit the island. Most of the participants say they feel the need to visit the island to be more up to date. This also reflects why they are not so up-to date with the island as they would wish to be. Thus, they have a need to be more in touch with the product to increase their knowledge. Table 6 represents the participants’ responses on the cultural background comparison.

Table 6*Results for cultural background comparison between employees and organization*

Category	Motives	Participant	Sample comments
Positive (<i>n</i> =16)	Similarities	Respondent 15	"No because I am Dutch, I believe I have that connection with Aruba, so people trust me and know what I am talking about, I think if I had another culture background it would have been different"
		Respondent 5	"Not really a difficulty. When I started I didn't know anything at all, but this didn't demotivate me. People from outside they don't understand what the company does. When it comes to culture difference I don't think it plays a role. Aruba has a good level of Spanish, text wise might be different but most of it is easy to comprehend. Arubans are open for other cultures because they are used to it since forever by living out of tourism"
Negative (<i>n</i> =3)	Uncertainties	Respondent 10	"Yes, I believe that I myself do not know Aruba. People from outside don't understand my job and are confused how ATA works. I myself don't believe I know how ATA works, there are a lot of job descriptions, allot of titles and that's a challenge, because I feel I do not have sufficient knowledge about it"
	Education needs	Respondent 19	"I feel it is important for us is the sales team to visit the island at least every year or every other year as things are changing so much on island. The travel agent and consumers look at us as the expert and assume that we know everything. There's nothing better than seeing and understanding Aruba in cultural events and experiencing them on our own. Travel agents and consumers look to us for our total expertise. No better way to gaining total expertise than visiting the island on a frequent basis"
	Bureaucracy	Respondent 18	"No, I worked with Barbados before, it was fine. It is not about the culture. It is about the work ethics. The administration ways of doing stuff interrupts the process within the organization. There is a lot of internal paperwork. A good thing is communication wise is easy because they speak English"

5 DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to find out if the cultural background differences between the employee and the organization affect the employee's views on organizational identification. Specifically, how the cultural background differences between the employee and organization affect the employee's identification within the context of destination representation. By means of a qualitative study in a small group of international representatives from the ATA this study examined how these international stakeholders categorize themselves in a culture representative organization.

The results show that the categorization process in the context of destination representation is a somewhat self-contradictory process. That is to say, a distinction was made between the company and the service. When it comes to identification, most of the participants said they identify with the product Aruba. This implies that participants identify most likely with the product (Aruba) they are working for rather than the organization. This gives an indication how one categorize themselves in this particular culture representative organization, which is in relation mostly with the product or service (Aruba). In fact, this is important to accomplish and it is something positive for the organization because at the end of the day it is about Aruba he or she will be working for and not for the organization. So is it really necessary to identify with the organization? Considering the study of Reade (2001) which illustrates the benefits that Organizational Identification brings for an organization such as "enhanced organization performance", one would think yes. However, considering the results of this current study, the identification with the organization (ATA) which was not found, does not necessarily imply that the business is not good, nor that the employees are discontent. This finding raises the next question: Is it perhaps that every organization has a different way to accomplish a successful performance? And therefore organizational identification does not provide the same outcome for every organization? This current study shows that identification is not the primarily goal or a necessity amongst the employees. However, the participants did emphasize in making a separation between the product and organization, stating therefore that they feel identified with the product. This implies that even though there is no organizational identification found, there is another sort of identification (with product) found in this study. This finding raises the question of: does the identification with the product also bring positive outcomes as the identification with organization? Or is there such a thing as service- product identification? Considering the goal of the organization which is to increase the numbers of visitors to the island and the high

level of identification with the product, one could conclude that it has a positive outcome for the organization. In other words, there is a match between the identification of the participants and the organization's goal. This current study also addresses the lacking of educational needs the participants feel, which in turn reflects on the participant's motivation. Since the motivation is high in terms of wanting to learn more about the product, because it benefits the participants in presenting and selling the destination in their market, the following question arises: is the Organizational Identification necessary to affect the motivation amongst stakeholders? Considering this current study results, it appears not.

Secondly, this study gives new insights regarding self-categorization in multinational corporations. In the case of self-categorization, the participants were not able to give a concrete definition of their categorization. This is to be seen by the majority responses on "no-groups" and the following group which is "outgroup". This suggests that participants feel uncertain on their position within the organization, otherwise the answers would have been better defined. This compliments the theory of Hogg (2000) who explains that the self-categorization process is essential to reduce uncertainties. In other words; uncertainties contributes to group behaviors leading on that participants consider themselves as out-groups while when you consider yourself as part of the in-group your uncertainties are being reduced. However studies on self-categorization on multinational companies suggest that it is important to have a similarity connection because this contributes to the sharing knowledge within an organization (Hanssen, 1999). The term "similarities" appears in this study when the majority of the participants claim that the cultural background differences are similar in certain aspects. The cultural background similarities reported by some participants consisted of being relaxed, open to communicate, understandable, friendly and even similarities in language. In turn, this makes the participants feel identified with the people of the home organization (Arubans). This finding compliments the study of Brass et al. (2004) who explains the importance of having similarities which is an antecedent of forming business related connection. Yet, Brass (2004) also speaks about dissimilarities, which is also found in this study in the way the participants refer to the organizational bureaucracy. This explains how certain participants are not content and do not identify with the organization, because of the difference in work ethics. Here some participants refer to the work ethics as the "Aruban way" comparing therefore the work ethics with their own nationality. Similarities or dissimilarities found in this study are also comparable with the concept of faultlines (Lau & Murnighan, 1998). The concept discussed that groups are based either on demographic or non-demographic attributes. Even though the

majority of the participants reported that they do not experience groups within the organization, the ones who did, reported that it is based on non-demographic attributes. Thus, it is based on differences in personalities, work ethics and position rather than age or gender. These non-demographic differences are also the reason why the participants experience discrimination.

Thirdly, this study contributes to the understanding of work values people seek through their work. In line with the study of Schwartz (1999) who explains the different work values or rewards people seek through their work. This study shows that majority of the international representatives for Aruba find rewards through social work value. This is illustrated as one of the main reasons on why participants identify with Aruba. This is also seen in the perceived external image which has to do with social and status. The participants reported to be fascinated with the opportunities the organization offer them in terms of, helping others (markets) and working with different people (social). Thus, the social perspective in the Aruba Tourism Authority is important because based on this the employees and stakeholders identify themselves and make meaning out of work.

Finally, when it comes to the cultural backgrounds of this study which are the Americans, Europeans and Latins, the results are similar to that of Schwartz (1999) who explains that the Americans seek power in work, and this could be one of the explanations behind the discontent of the American sample in this study. Even though it is more about the feelings of being left out (compared to Latins), some American stated that they know their market and they want to be free to execute on their market, which reflects on the need of having power. However, the study of Schwartz (1999) explains that Latins tend to be collectivists and this study's results do not match this theory, hence most of the Latins answered that there are "no groups" showing that their focus and priority is on getting work done independently and thus are not in need of teamwork to execute work. However, the finding of this study agrees with Schwartz (1999) on the Latin's social work value. According to Swartz (1999) Europeans are individualist and this does relate to this study's findings which illustrates that the Europeans are independent workers, and their focus is not on the social perspective of a job.

5.1 Limitations

This study is a starting point in examining culture differences within destination marketing organizations. Several limitations should be noticed.

While theoretically proven by Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) that data saturation could be achieved with 12 interviews (lower than this study's sample) still this study could not be considered applicable for different cultures other than the cultures studied in this sample.

First, this study's sample was a convenience sampling rather than purposive sampling. One of the major limitations of convenience sampling is the chance of having "biased results". For instance this study sample consisted of Latins, Europeans and Americans in relation to the Aruban culture. On one hand, the results indicated that the Latins and Europeans are the most identified with Aruba and positive about everything in general compared to the Americans. The Latin and European culture are to some extent related to the Aruban culture because of a) the Latin influence Aruba holds and b) because Aruba is part of the Dutch kingdom. On the other hand, the Americans which are the group who were less content are also the group which is the least related to the Aruban culture due to not having cultural heritage similarities.

Second, the sample of the participants consisted of a mix of flex workers holding more than one account and some official Aruba Tourism Authorities employees. In terms of self-categorization this could have had a certain influence on the outcome since it is almost impossible to report identification with Aruba or even ATA when as a flex worker you have other accounts as well. This is what is called "incomplete conclusion" due to having a convenience sampling. Therefore, this current study cannot provide a conclusion on the self-categorization process but can rather provide an indication. Another characteristic limitation of the sample is the factor gender. This study did not focus on the gender, because it was not part of the aim of the study which was about cultural background differences. According to Hofstede et al. (2010) culture differences are not usually described in terms of cultures. However, previous studies on multinational companies do incorporate the factor gender. This could possibly mean that having a better mix of genders could have led to different results. However, the gender count in this sample aligns with the gender population of the head office in Aruba (more woman than men). Thus, the gender population of this study is a reasonable picture of the genders in the studied organization.

Fourth, when it comes to organizational identification, there are some criteria that this study did not take into account. According the study of Reade (2011) organizational identification is fostered by: (1) the prestige and distinctiveness of the local company, (2) support and appreciation of superiors at corporate headquarters and (3) opportunity for career advancement and fulfillment within global organization.

As to see this current study did not address these three antecedents of organizational identification. However, these three antecedents did appear during the interview amongst the participant's responses but still these three antecedents were not deeply investigated.

Furthermore, this qualitative study was meant to inform and describe rather than statistically analyze and generalize. It is the first study that contributes to the field of the tourism bureaus and especially on the promotion of Aruba and the attributes of Aruba (people and organizational structure). Thus, this study is applicable for the organization (ATA) however for other multinational companies it could not be completely applicable due to the small sample and specific cultural backgrounds examined. This study illustrates how certain work values that someone who works independently seeks the most reward of, this way giving other multinational companies guidance in how to recognize the company's stakeholders work values.

5.2 Future research

This current study offers the possibility to discover and describe how different cultures work together and what the similarities and dissimilarities are and their consequences in a working field. This is consistent with previous literature on multinational companies that illustrates how interpersonal similarities have positive outcomes such as; higher tendency of interaction (Makela, Kalla & Piekkari, 2007). More research is needed on the tourism bureaus sector, to identify factors that generate identification within this context. Therefore, as a researcher I look forward for future similar studies on tourism or destination marketing organizations with other samples so a comparison could be made to extend the current findings. Moreover, to compare if a separation between the product and organization when it comes to organizational identification is something common. In addition, to find out if identifying culture similarities bring positive results in terms of identification and categorization and therefore contribute to the employees and stakeholder's motivation which is essential in multinational corporations.

More research is also needed on identification of flex workers, since this current study gives an insight on flex workers and how these identify themselves with their accounts. Therefore, a comparison with studies on flex workers would be ideal to compare and better understand what fosters identification of flex workers.

5.3 Conclusion

To encounter cultural background difference is inevitable and it has its influences on both the personal and professional life of an individual. This study confirms this by the participant's responses, reporting on the differences between their own their cultural background and the organization.

The cultural background differences found in this particular context are mostly on work ethics, language barriers and values. Interestingly, having cultural background differences between the organization and the employee does not necessarily means that it is something negative. In fact, some of participants refer to having difficulties because of the cultural background differences as an irrelevant statement. In contrast, this is seen as something positive due to the reported similarities amongst the participant's cultural background and the organization culture. These positive culture similarities influence the participant's perceptions on "groups" within the organization. Consequently, these similarities were the reason why participants reported on not having experienced groups within the organization. This implies that since the participants did not report feeling part of the in-group it is not a necessity nor a priority for the participants in terms of self-categorization. Even though an organization would find it ideal for its employees to report being part of the in-group, reporting that are no groups in a similar vein can be considered just as good news for the organization. By reporting that there are no groups, there can be concluded that most participants do not feel excluded, and feel comfortable no matter the cultural background difference in terms of self-categorization.

When it comes to organizational identification it appears that the cultural background does not affect the employee's identification. What does affect is the product they represent and work for. This is noticed by the way the participants made a separation between the product and organization when asked about identification. In fact, this is a call for the organization (ATA); to communicate to key people on the island to keep the product growing, because this is what makes their relationship strong with their international stakeholders. In addition, at the end of the day, it will help the organization's ultimate goal as well, which is increasing the visitor's numbers to the island.

In conclusion, the findings have a theoretical relevance for the debate on whether national cultures or organizational cultures exert a predominant influence in the workplace. On the practical side, the current findings indicate an important general implication for both academics and tourism bureaus practitioners whom should give more attention in identifying the potentially positive effects on organizational identification deriving from the product or service the organization

represents. Identifying these effects would be a vital first step toward establishing a connection, great relationship and motivation amongst the organization's stakeholders.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Schwartz (1999) compatibility work values and culture values

TABLE 2
Hypothesised Compatibility and Conflict of Culture Value Emphases with Dimensions of Work

<i>Dimensions of Work</i>	<i>Cultural Value Emphases</i>	
	<i>Compatible</i>	<i>Conflicting</i>
<i>Work Centrality</i>		
Contrasted with leisure, community, family, religion	Mastery Hierarchy	Affective Autonomy Egalitarianism Harmony Conservatism
<i>Societal Norms about Working</i>		
Entitlement vs. Obligation	Egalitarianism Intellectual Autonomy	Conservatism Hierarchy
<i>Work Values</i>		
Power	Hierarchy Mastery	Harmony Egalitarianism
Intrinsic	Intellectual Autonomy Affective Autonomy	Conservatism
Extrinsic	Conservatism Hierarchy	Intellectual Autonomy
Social	Egalitarianism Harmony	Hierarchy Mastery

Appendix B: Interview scheme

About organization, work and tools.

You are currently representing an international company.

1. What is it that you do for ATA?
 - a. What are your responsibilities?
 - b. For how long have you been working for ATA?
2. How would you describe the most important values and goals of your company?
 - a. How do you feel about these values?
 - b. What would you say about the strengths and weaknesses of your company that you're working for?
3. What makes you the most satisfied about your work? And what makes you least satisfied? Why?
4. Could you describe how decisions are being made within the company?
 - a. How are these being communicated to you? Island decisions / communications go to the
 - b. When there is a change, how is this being communicated?
 - c. Are there meetings that you attend for this, are these helpful?
 - d. Are there suggestions maybe for better communication regarding decision made or changes?
5. Whom would you say is your employing organization? Or for whom do you work for?
 - a. How important is ATA

Link with Home Organization –Aruba (dependence of Home organization)

6. You are representing and selling Aruba... do you feel you have sufficient knowledge about the product you're selling?
 - a. Have you ever been in situation that you feel you don't have the sufficient knowledge?
 - b. How is the organization hindering or facilitating this?
7. Do you reach out to your home organization? When? How?
8. Does the time difference and distance with Aruba influence your job activities? If yes please explain if in a positive or negative way?
9. Do you think it is important to be closer with the home organization or not?

Work meaning

10. Do you remember when you started working for the organization, how the adjustment process was?
 - a. How did you deal with the process? Who helped you?
 - b. Did you experience any difficulties
11. Why did you become a representative for Aruba?
12. What does your work mean to you?
13. What makes your work important or meaningful?
 - a. Do you think it is important for the US Market (the country it is based) or for Aruba?
14. Would you work for another destination? Why (not)?
 - a. Would you combine it with Aruba or not? .

Identification with organization- Self categorization

Suppose you're at a party. Someone asks you what kind of job you have.

15. What do you tell then?
 - a. What do you feel when someone asks you do you work for Aruba or for Latin America? Please explain
16. Would you say you can identify yourself with the organization your working for?
 - a. Is this ATA or the organization in the US country and why?

Link with culture background and representing Aruba

An organization is sometimes known to have in- and out-groups. With in-groups are meant people who share same values, culture background, views etc. And out-groups are the people who do not belong to this group, or who feel excluded at certain level from the in-groups.

17. Would you consider the organization has groups?
 - a. If yes please explain based on what?
 - b. Does your culture background plays a role with this and why?
18. To which group would you position yourself and why?
19. How would you categorize yourself in ATA/ home organization?
 - a. Do you feel part of ATA, why yes or no? Do you feel part of your organization in location?
20. Where would you categorize yourself the most?
21. Do you feel it's necessary to be part of in-group in order for you to work optimal?

22. Do people ever ask you if it's difficult to work for a country that you barely don't know or your not from?
- a. If yes, explain your reaction
 - b. Talk about difficulties
 - c. How do you overcome these difficulties?
 - d. Is the difference in culture a difficulty? In What aspect?

Final Question

23. Would you call yourself an Aruban expert? Or a destination expert? Or what type of expert?
- a. The type of expert, focusing ultimately on what?

Appendix C: Codebook-First draft

Category	Subcategory	Definition	Example statements
Identification	Identification with ATA	Experiences	I do feel part of ATA, because I have been around ever since the change of government to independent office. I saw the changes, I have seen the growth. I Feel personal attached, I can share more info now, I know what I am talking about. Work goes on at all times.
		Supportive Team	A great solid support both from the company and ATA. I do feel I receive great support from ATA, when during meetings and from the other countries. There is a nice work sphere
		Vision and Mission	The mission is to be the leader in Caribbean destination and have a great relationship with stakeholders with innovation. The strength is being innovative, they have allot of projects focusing on the product Aruba
	Identification with Aruba	Feeling passionate about Aruba	Yes I identify with Aruba and ATA. People in the office talk about Aruba like they know it. So you feel as part of Aruba. I have a passion and love for the island and the people of Aruba after working with and for the destination for so long. Being out in the field, talking with others at tradeshow, presentations or in trainings about Aruba and seeing interest and excitement back on their faces is priceless.
		Pride	I feel that I have the best job in the world, cus I represent Aruba, I am proud of the destination. Proud to make people aware to show off the island
		Quality Product	The goal is to bring more Colombians to Aruba, to be more recognize and maintain a great position as a vacation destination amongst Colombians. Aruba is a good product to offer. The price is still very high compared to competitors, and this is challenge for Colombian market since it is diverse.
Communication	Identification with independent company		I work for ID digital Colombia, this is my boss. My indirect boss is Aruba, in this case director latin America for ATA
	Communication via area director		When it comes to changes, there is a conference call and the director of chile here attends and he then informs us. When its something more formal we get an email from Aruba. I feel it is a very transparent communication, monthly or we get information straight from ATA.
	Communication direct with Aruba		It is a good communication. The "Aruba ta nos" meetings in Colombia are every 15 days, so we are being constantly informed. The Colombian office has a good assistant heidy. Eventhough the director herself has allot on her plate, it could take some time for her to answer. Sjeidy in Aruba is more easy to find, always available online. Some info for press members should be more easy to have accessible, meaning having much more files available for us to get easier to..I think so.

Work meaning	Intrinsic	Responsibility	or Aruba, because we are responsible for the tourists and numbers. Our company brought Brasil to Aruba. So for us we need to keep it up, we do have growing numbers, so it is an important market for Aruba.
		Trust	Strengthening is the destination, now there are specialized destination management so the market is growing as well. I feel they trust me, they let me control my market because I know my market the best. There is good communication no matter the position of the person in the company.
		Loyalty	It means a lot, because it takes a lot of my hours per day. It is my job and I love what I do, it is pleasant, and I feel motivated because of the people I work with and the destination itself. My
		Pride	boss is great to work with (CARLOS). I like to work, working already fascinates me. Aruba is an account that makes me proud and I
	Extrinsic	Pay	feel thankful to be part of Aruba. For me it is stability, in an economic way. Gives me knowledge and I can connect it with my
		Business growth	studies. I do have a vision that I want to learn more and grow in this work. It is a great work environment, and I am enthusiastic about my job.
	Social	Contact with people	That I have seen the product Aruba grow and contributed also to the growth in market. I can see the positive outcomes of my work. I help other new representatives as well for example Argentina, so I believe I am contributing to all the markets and all in all to Aruba well being and growth. In return I get great compliments and we as Peru and Chile representatives are being used as a great example of representation. That for me makes me very proud.
		Recognition	cause of my love of travel, and my love of working with and for people. I love talking to people and I love being with people... I'm a people person and sales is a people job. When I was hired to work for Aruba, I'd never been to Aruba, so I did not realize what my love of Aruba would be until I actually went there for the first time. At that time, like many others, I did fall in love with the island.
			What makes my job meaningful is when at the end of the day I have helped agents and consumers decide on their perfect vacation, meaning that I have helped qualify them into the property that we both feel would make the perfect match for them for their vacation. We as Americans do not have much vacation time, so it is important that we qualify our guests into the correct property. I love receiving a thank

you note, or a note of acknowledgment that when guests have returned from Aruba saying, they had the best vacation of their life. That makes me happy.

Role Meaning	Aruban expert	Aruba at heart. I feel like a talk and represent aruba as a true ambassador of the island. It is the destiny that makes it easier to sell and I do honestly think its great
	Non Aruban expert	I think I am a content expert. Focusing on developing contents
Organizational Culture	Negatively seen	It is something you have to understand and learn to work with or you will pull your hair out. If you understand the culture, you understand the behavior. I was just speaking with a hotel rep who has hotels in several Caribbean and Latin American destinations and he was asking me if there was a book written by an Aruban on Aruban cultural behavior. He found one for another of his destinations and shared it with his HQ and team members. They then had understanding when it came to difficulties they had been receiving due to the differences in cultures. Everyone needs a little understanding
	Work ethics	I position myself with North America group which is par of ATA, but not with the Aruban ATA in terms of work ethics.
	Paper procedure	The administration ways of doing stuff that interrupt the process within the organization. There is allot of internal paperwork.
	Positively seen	For me it isn't difficult. Maybe for the travel agents since they haven't been to aruba, and they need to convince and sell to people. The good thing is that Papiamento is similar to portugues. It is easier to communicate because of the arubans knowldegde on lenaguages.I usually go to Carlos when in need, and depending on matter then will contact aruba
Out-group	Based on position	for the most part at times, especially when on island the click will begin and if our local colleagues do not feel like associating with you, they don't. Those who have lived abroad for any duration are usually the most welcoming When being in annual meeting you feel instantly who is part of the organization and who is just a service or representative. For example when handing out kits or presents etc When we come down to the island for business, we are many times looked at like we are coming down to go to the beach. Many of my trips I do not even bring a swimsuit and my only beach time is from 7p-10p when we have a function for the group out on the beach. I am just as glow in the dark white when I come home as when I left. Staying and extra day is not really frowned upon but not welcomed either. They make us feel as if we are asking a lot or taking advantage of our partners to do this

	Based on lack of motivation		I feel we have some excellent people working for us yet we keep hiring more staff and outside consultant companies. We could better utilize each employee's strengths. Motivation is our biggest weakness. On island they are not use to having to be motivated as in the past, and I have not seen it change yet, once you are hired (as a Government employee), you cannot be fired. What motivates you? Since HQ never had to worry about motivation, it is not addressed in other areas where employees are on term contract and guaranteed the position. Plus it shows in your work. If you are motivated or feel appreciated, you work twice as hard without being asked
	Based on feelings of discrimination	Inner competition	The goal is to rise up the tourism numbers coming from Colombia. Lately the Colombian market there are working with diferent agencies , and it is a sense of "crossing"eachother. Because at the end we all have diferent goals but we all want to win the project. At times this feels as a competition
		Sharing Information	I do feel I do not know enough of the island. I feel there are always changes and I am not fully aware f these. To help myself I go online to the website or even google. Or also I call Aruba for directions
In-group	Based on culture similarities		Culture backround is not something negative. I think we are similar to Aruban, meaning we are happy and relaxed as well, so this is something good.
No groups	Equal goals		Don't believe there are groups. We all work very hard for Aruba and we have a responsibility. All working for same goal and I believe we lose our nationality to focus on the job and Aruba
Organizational Issues	Accurate product knowlegde		Yes, but I do feel it is important for us is the sales team to visit the island at least every year or every other year as things are changing so much on island. The travel agent and consumers look at us as the expert and assume that we know everything. I know we cannot know everything, but there is opportunity for us to go to the island, see what is new, and explore areas of Aruba that many as of us have never been. I also think it's important for us to experience Carnival, music festivals, sports events etc. so we in turn can talk about packages as these all events that Aruba is spending a lot of money on producing.. There's nothing better than seeing and understanding Aruba in these events by experiencing them on our own. Travel agents and consumers look to us for our total expertise. No better way to gaining total expertise than visiting the island on a frequent basis. We do lead a fam each year, but I also think that it is important to have a yearly ATA sales fam

