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Student Name: Sapphire Sookram  
Student ID no.: 816007607  
Degree Program: BA Spanish and French  
Supervisor: Romulo Guedez-Fernandez

Title of Thesis:

"A case study on the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago over the last three years (2018-2021)."

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## ABSTRACT

The Venezuelan migration is currently one of the largest in the world. Trinidad and Tobago, being their neighbour country, has been a place to call home for thousands of migrants. The main aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of Trinbagonian citizens towards Venezuelan migrants. The researcher was inspired after witnessing the negative stigma attached to the Venezuelan migrants. Hence, the research focuses on the concerns and perceptions of Trinbagonians, as well as the reasons and treatment of Venezuelan migrants. Data were obtained from a questionnaire administered to a total of one hundred and twenty-three (n=123) participants via *Google* forms. Ninety-two (n=92) were female and thirty-one (n=31) were male. The qualitative data were analysed by thematic coding, while the quantitative data, numerically. This study outlines the main findings of the investigation which indicated positive, negative and neutral attitudes. Positive attitudes towards the male migrants included: hardworking, family oriented, survival and good-natured, whereas negative attitudes included: unpleasant, aggressive, lack of work ethic, contribute to the rise in criminality and vulnerable to exploitation. Positive attitudes towards the female migrants included: hardworking, survival, attractive, good-natured and family oriented while the negative attitudes included: vulnerable to exploitation, immoral, discriminated against, sexually objectified, unpleasant and ill-mannered. The concerns stemming from the generalized perceptions of the migrants, revealed themes of economic strain and lack of resources, the ongoing pandemic and the spread of illnesses, the violation of human rights and the rise in criminality. Influenced by the pre-existing attitudes, the citizens' treatment of migrants involved exploitation, discrimination, the language barrier, the objectification of women, and abuse and violence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Immigration has existed for centuries and with increasing globalization and other motives, it has become even more rampant and characteristic of the modern society. Immigration can be characterized by the need for a change of environment, different problematic situations that present themselves in a particular country of origin and as a means of escape or survival. Trinidad and Tobago continues to be described as a melting pot of cultures due not only to its colonial past, but also because of increased globalization. Given its strategic location and proximity to Venezuela, over the years, the Venezuelan migrants have continued to land on its shores. Recently, the number of Venezuelans entering the country at once, has exceedingly increased due to the social and political unrest that evidently forced them to flee and seek refuge and asylum status in their neighbour country, Trinidad and Tobago. However, this number cannot be confirmed given that all migrants are not registered. It is roughly estimated that the country hosts more than 40,000 Venezuelans (Martinez).

The study being conducted examines the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants over the last three years (2018-2021). These attitudes are varied, and negative stereotypes and perceptions have always existed and will continue to exist. Immigration continues to be a very controversial and problematic issue, but it is also current and very pertinent to the society of Trinidad and Tobago. In various studies conducted in the field of immigration, it is noted that the negative attitudes always outnumber the positive attitudes and perceptions. Hence, this study seeks to provide an in-depth exploration of both the positive and negative attitudes of Trinbagonians towards the Venezuelan migrants.

### *Rationale*

The main inspiration for this choice of topic was the researcher's first-hand observation of the negative attitudes or perceptions of Trinbagonian citizens and their inhumane treatment when interacting with the Venezuelan migrants. This has been portrayed in almost every medium of communication whether it be in newspaper articles, on the radio or on the local news channel. This sparked the need to identify if these attitudes were solely negative or if citizens try to understand the situation of the migrants. It was also important to explore the treatment of the migrants. This prompted the researcher to outline and understand the concerns of the Trinbagonians as it relates to their own well-being and their access to resources. Additionally, it was necessary to identify the reasons for their migration to Trinidad and Tobago in order to understand the challenges that they face as migrants. As a final year student who hopes to work with immigrants and work for the United Nations, and being familiar with the Venezuelan culture and the current social and political unrest, the researcher would like to highlight the factors influencing the attitudes, both positive and negative, towards the Venezuelan migration. This introductory chapter constitutes the rationale, aims, objectives and the methodology of this research.

### *Aims*

This study aims to investigate the attitudes of Trinbagonian citizens towards Venezuelan migrants. The research will address the concerns and perceptions of Trinbagonians as well as the reasons/motives and treatment of the Venezuelan migrants.

### *Objectives*

- To outline the attitudes towards Venezuelan migrants.

- To examine the attitudes towards Venezuelan migrants.

### *Definition*

1. Trinbagonians– According to Index Mundi, Trinbagonian is used on occasion to describe a citizen of the country without specifying the island of origin (used throughout the study to refer to natives or inhabitants of Trinidad and Tobago).

### *Research questions*

1. What are the positive attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants?
2. What are the negative attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants?
3. What are the general concerns of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants?
4. How is the treatment of the Venezuelan migrants?

### *Methodology*

The main focus was identifying and examining the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards the influx of Venezuelan migrants. The researcher saw it necessary to utilize not only primary sources of data collection in order to identify current perceptions of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants, but also to employ secondary sources to corroborate the information gathered. For the purpose of this yearlong research paper, the researcher used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The data collected was of great use in exploring the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants. The qualitative method of data collection included observations and open-ended, opinion-based responses from the questionnaire. The analysis of qualitative data was carried out by thematic coding. These themes evolved from the responses to the questionnaire. The quantitative data were also gathered from

the latter by quantifying coded data and using numerical analysis. Each research method was administered via *Google* forms, as it was the safest and most convenient method given the ongoing pandemic.

After careful observation, it aided the researcher in the design of a questionnaire (see Appendix A). This questionnaire included very specific questions, most of which required an open-ended response. Participants responded both anonymously and voluntarily. The sample size was not specified, since the researcher's aim was to solicit as many responses as possible. This was because the study required participants from across Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, the questionnaire was not limited to any demographic factor to ensure relevancy and variation (see Appendices B and C). The total number of responses obtained was one hundred and twenty-three (n=123) with ninety-two (n=92) female and thirty-one (n=31) male participants. The age bracket was generally wide, ranging from sixteen (n=16) to sixty-five (n=65) years.

In the introduction of this study, the rationale, aims and objectives, research questions and methodology are presented. Chapter One provides a review of literature related to this particular study and the theoretical framework that binds this research is introduced. This framework aids in the analysis of the main attitudes that influence the treatment of migrants in the particular context. Chapter Two outlines the most pertinent findings derived from the questionnaire. Chapter Three discusses these findings, as it relates to previous research conducted in this field. The ultimate chapter aims to briefly conclude the research as well as to present the researcher's limitations and recommendations on the topic.

## CHAPTER 1

### Literature Review

Within the last few years, Trinidad and Tobago has seen an incredible rise in its number of Venezuelan migrants entering the country. This has sparked many social, cultural and economic problems. Hence, the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago have been reacting both negatively and positively to this ongoing phenomenon. This study focuses on the attitudes and perceptions towards Venezuelan immigrants. Thus, in this chapter, the reasons for this influx of migrants will be generally outlined, the concerns of the Trinbagonian citizens will be addressed and the attitudes which influence the treatment of said migrants, will be examined.

#### *Reasons influencing the Venezuelan migration to Trinidad and Tobago*

There are many reasons which may cause a person to migrate to another country. According to Avila Hernández (2018) who writes on the challenges of migration, it may be the desire to access better healthcare services, achieve a better education, obtain employment or simply improve their quality of life. Some, however, are forced out of a country due to many situations that threaten their lives and well-being. This is the situation of Venezuelan migrants. Many are fleeing their native country for reasons that pose threats to their livelihood, their families and their overall health (Avila Hernández 2018).

#### *Attitudes/Perceptions towards Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago*

Attitudes and perceptions are the central focus of this research paper. From a sociological point of view, an attitude refers to a "mental position with regard to a fact or state or a feeling or emotion toward a fact or state" (Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary) and so in accordance with this study, these attitudes towards Venezuelan migrants are clearly linked to firmly held

views about the economic self-interest and social identity of the native population (Card et al. 3). Conversely, the Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary defines perception as a judgement resulting from awareness or understanding. Therefore, attitudes and perceptions work in tandem as it relates to the response of Trinbagonians to the Venezuelan migration. The researcher seeks to highlight how these attitudes affect both the citizens' concerns and treatment of the Venezuelan migrants, later on in the study.

Some of the perceptions include that of prostitution and criminal activity. Very few sources outline the positive attitudes that migrants are hardworking and skilled. Therefore, based on these, the negative attitudes towards them, outweigh the positive ones. As stated previously, one of the main perceptions the citizens of T&T have, is that Venezuelan women are all involved in prostitution. This perception has indeed influenced the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards the migrants, because now they are judged and met with hostility on many occasions. An unnamed author in an article by Stabroek News reports the comments of very disheartened Venezuelan women standing in line at one of the registration centres in June 2019. The Venezuelan women express disappointment in how Trinidadian women treated them. Their attitude has been an accusatory one. One woman states " We did not come here to take your husbands" (Stabroek News 2019). She also conveyed that many of the Venezuelan women have worthy and respectable occupations such as teachers and doctors, and further stressed that not all of them delve into a life of prostitution, saying that they feel both insulted and degraded by these misperceptions. Additionally, the article emphasizes the fact that most Trinidadian men perceive that they are all prostitutes and are only interested in having sexual relations. Hence, their attitude towards the migrants seems to be mainly negative and harmful. Examples of these are provided as the author of the article reports many instances where Trinidadian men are

approaching them in the comfort of their homes, expecting them to perform inappropriate sexual favours and acts. There is the constant mention of the disappointment and degradation felt by the Venezuelan women in response to the attitudes Trinidadian citizens have towards them (Stabroek News 2019).

This perception that Venezuelan women are prostitutes is communicated by Alexander (2019) who also explains, that they are working in bars and are engaged in prostitution. Gregory Scruggs, another writer, relates the experience of another Venezuelan migrant that “Trinidadians think we are prostitutes, we bring drugs, guns, that sort of thing” (Scruggs 2018). However, on a positive note, Alexander (2019) also explains that the Venezuelans know little about minimum wage, but some are very hardworking and skilled and some even university graduates.

This opinion is supported by John-Lall (2021) who also comments that many Venezuelan women have complained of exploitation and attitudes of disrespect not just by citizens but also by T&T’s immigration officials. In this same article, he indicates that there are many stereotypes of female migrants that try to define what they should or should not be doing. The interviewee in said article by John-Lall (2021), states very sarcastically that, “they could not possibly be coming here to make an honest living and to remit funds back to their family. They couldn’t be here because they are trying to eke out a decent livelihood for their families back home, but they are here because they want to engage in prostitution.” The author further expresses that many have been ridiculed and embarrassed by immigration officials who decline to see their Letter of Invitation, further belittling them by saying, “I know what you’re here to do” (John-Lall).

*Citizen's Treatment of Venezuelan migrants*

Much can be said about the treatment of the migrants. There are recurring themes of exploitation, lack of respect for human rights, stereotypes of predominantly female migrants and the general abuse and discrimination towards the Venezuelan migrants. These are the main treatments they endure living in Trinidad and Tobago. The negative perceptions and attitudes towards them are evidenced by how they are treated. A common thread seems to be that there are more negative outcomes than positive.

Regarding exploitation, most of the female migrants are professionals back home and while the perception is justified, in that some of them choose prostitution as a means of generating income, others are just here for survival (Stabroek News 2019). For this reason, Raghubir et al. (2020) reveal that Venezuelan women are often trafficked, and corruption plays a huge role in the exploitation of these women. Corrupt immigration officials, as well as police officers take bribes, protect the wrongdoers and perpetuate the trade (Raghubir et al. 2020).

Alexander (2019) also examines exploitation as she states that most migrants prove to be hardworking, dedicated and are employed in tyre shops among other odd jobs. However, as she states, there have been numerous instances that indicate a certain level of exploitation, overwork and underpayment. Many even fear registration since Immigration and Border Control become aware of their presence, which consequently makes them fear deportation. Additionally, the migrants are often confused by the Government's public statements and the language barrier presents several obstacles for them.

Mohan (2019) in his study also expresses that Venezuelans have been prone to daily exploitation, discrimination and abuse. There have been several reports on what he describes as

‘under the table’ job exploitation and abuse. He also discusses issues of police abuse, unprovoked violent attacks on Venezuelan males by Trinbagonians and rapes of Venezuelan women. He mentions that citizens of Trinidad and Tobago have long held an inauspicious view of Venezuelans and there is the general sexualisation of Venezuelan women. However, these attitudes have been amplified with the recent influx of migrants in the country. These views have morphed into discriminatory and xenophobic characterizations of migrants (Mohan 42).

There is much to say about the lack of legislation and policies established for migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. Many have agreed and commented on this claim. Martinez (2019) in her news story, speaks of the country’s current legislation that prohibits refugees and migrants from working and accessing the official school system. She further states, “Yet a lot of Trinbagonians are welcoming Venezuelans and other asylum seekers, helping them to integrate” (Martinez). These laws, which prevent migrant children from accessing the public school system are highlighted and it is also expressed that these issues intensify the humanitarian crisis in Trinidad and Tobago (Teff 2019). The author claims that these are very serious concerns about xenophobia and adds that the country neither provides migrants with adequate assistance nor access to protection and services. Unlike most Latin American countries, these migrants have not even been offered any special temporary status and as such they are often forced to live in hiding. This is evidenced by one Venezuelan asylum seeker who laments that , “Arrest, detention, deportation are constant fears for us – they affect everything about how we live our lives” (Teff 2019). John-Lall (2020) reiterates this by explaining the reasons why the level of exploitation of migrants presents a looming humanitarian crisis, indicating that people have been evicted from homes given the exorbitant rents they cannot afford; the increased levels of

exploitation in the workplace; they are not paid fairly and on time, and they work longer hours for which they are not paid (John-Lall 2020).

However, while there has been much criticism of the government's efforts, and claims have been made that Trinidad and Tobago has "systematically failed to have an adequate migration policy" (Scruggs 2018), the nation's Prime Minister has expressed disappointment and has even criticised more developed nations for their hypocrisy in dealing with similar issues. He discussed that while other nations have simply "slapped on visa restrictions" to combat the problem of a migrant influx, Trinidad and Tobago has extended a helping hand to its Venezuelan neighbours and has done its due diligence. Therefore, public servants of the United Nations should not have a say in the decision-making as it relates to the migrants (Bridglal 2018).

#### *Concerns of Trinbagonian citizens*

In response to the increase in Venezuelan migration, many citizens have expressed concerns of competition for resources or lack thereof, violations of the migrants' human rights, criminal activity, as well as break-up of families stemming from increased prostitution. In a country that embodies a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic society living in harmony, Christopher (2019) expresses the stance of the country's Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley that "Trinidad and Tobago will not open a refugee camp for the Venezuelans." He explains that "those are doors once you open them they are very difficult to close," while further expressing that Trinidad and Tobago is a small country and there are not enough resources for all its people, should the refugees desist to cross the borders (Christopher 2019).

This has been the general consensus of Trinbagonians who are concerned about the availability of resources. The country is already under pressure to provide healthcare, education and other basics for more than 50,000 Venezuelan migrants that have already arrived (Wilkinson 2020). Referring to this same problem, Alexander (2019) conveys that it even raises questions in the citizens' minds as to why they themselves cannot find work, yet the Venezuelans are finding work. She elaborates that numerous businesses are employing them.

Tillotson (2020) claims that Trinidad and Tobago's authorities have failed to condemn the massive human rights violations in Venezuela; they have ignored its human rights commitments and have placed more importance on protecting national security and exercising effective border control in the country. She adds that many NGOs and faith-based organisations have pooled resources to facilitate the migrants in need of international protection, but the Government is not on the same page (Tillotson 2020). However, this claim is refuted by the fact that, in response to the increasing number of Venezuelan nationals entering the country, the government of Trinidad and Tobago set up a programme in June of 2019 which offered the Venezuelan nationals temporary residency status. Although the authorities recorded some 17,000 migrants, international agencies tracking their movement, approximated the actual number closer to 40,000 (Daily Express Newspaper Editorial 2020). According to this article, despite the country's efforts to implement effective border control, the "flow of migrants has been continuing nearly unabated." This has presented many difficulties which are now facing the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Among other concerns is the Venezuelans' impact on the country. While the registration of Venezuelan nationals was a good move for the Trinbagonian government, this has, in fact unearthed numerous issues involving the migrants. In his article on the topic, Boodoosingh

(2019) relates the response of a Venezuelan migrant, now a citizen, where he explains that approximately 75 percent of the Venezuelan migrants have already been involved in criminal activity, according to his observation. Hence, they “have come into Trinidad looking for avenues to practice what they know[crime].” He also addresses the major concern that Venezuelans have increased crime levels in a country where crime is already rampant. For the migrants, engaging in criminal activity and working as prostitutes in bars and casinos are easy means of generating income. Added to that, given the language barrier, this has been their best option. Other problems include: human trafficking, gangs. Boodoosingh (2019) advances that Trinidadian citizens are continuing to express their frustration to the Government and police but minimal efforts are being taken. Alexander (2019) supports this claim of prostitution and the impact on T&T families saying that one Trinidadian woman has even reported that her husband visits a bar daily, but does not consume alcohol. Hence, this raises the concern that bar owners are hiring Venezuelan women to attract customers.

## CHAPTER 2

### Findings

This chapter presents the data collected from the questionnaires which revealed the attitudes and perceptions of Trinbagonian citizens towards Venezuelan migrants. As the researcher stated in the introductory chapter, this research entailed the distribution of questionnaires and first-hand observations as methods of data collection. The researcher tried not to limit the population to a specific gender or age, so as to provide a wide range of responses. The questionnaire was distributed via *Google* forms and was open to any and as many participants as possible. A total of 123 responses were recorded. The response was generally very varied and has shed light on a number of different perceptions of Venezuelan migrants. The data presented below illustrates results of four major categories: the reasons why Venezuelans migrate; the concerns of Trinbagonian citizens as it pertains to this situation; the attitudes towards the migrants; and the treatment of these individuals (see Appendix D). The researcher decided to present the data under these categories to fully explain the results obtained in this investigation.

Table 1: Ages of Participants

Age range

	16 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		50 - 65		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female	13	10.57	49	39.84	15	12.20	6	4.88	9	7.32	<b>92</b>	74.80
Male	1	0.81	16	13.01	8	6.50	2	1.63	4	3.25	<b>31</b>	25.20
Total	14	11.38	65	52.85	23	18.70	8	6.50	13	10.57	<b>123</b>	100.00

The demographic data of the participants revealed that there were both male (n=31) and female (n=92) respondents, aged 16 to 65 years. This ensured a wide variation of responses (see Table 1).

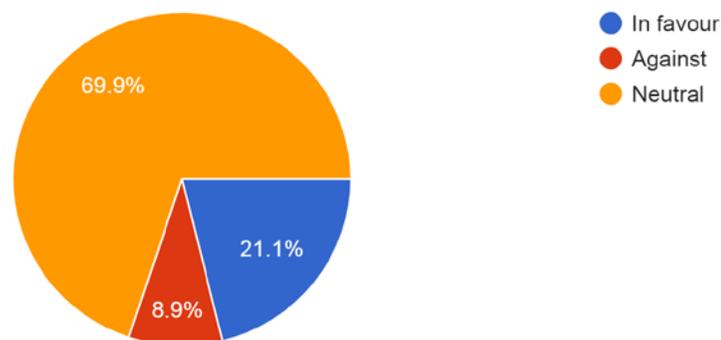


Fig. 1. The pie chart illustrating responses to the question: Are you in favour of or against Venezuelan immigration?

The majority of participants(69.9%) express a neutral stance with regard to Venezuelan migration, leaving some for (21.1%) and few against( 8.9%). This can be further broken down by gender of the participants. The following table demonstrates that more females(74.8%) than males(25.2%) would have responded to the questionnaire.

Table 2:

Responses( by gender) to the question: Are you in favour of or against Venezuelan immigration?

			<b>Total</b>	
			<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>74.80</b>
Against	11	8.94		
In favour	22	17.89		
Neutral	59	47.97		
<b>Male</b>			<b>31</b>	<b>25.20</b>
Against	0	0.00		
In favour	4	3.25		
Neutral	27	21.95		
<b>Total</b>			<b>123</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 2 is indicative of the general consensus of Trinbagonians towards the Venezuelan migration. Added to the information demonstrated in Fig. 1, this table provides a further breakdown of responses by gender.

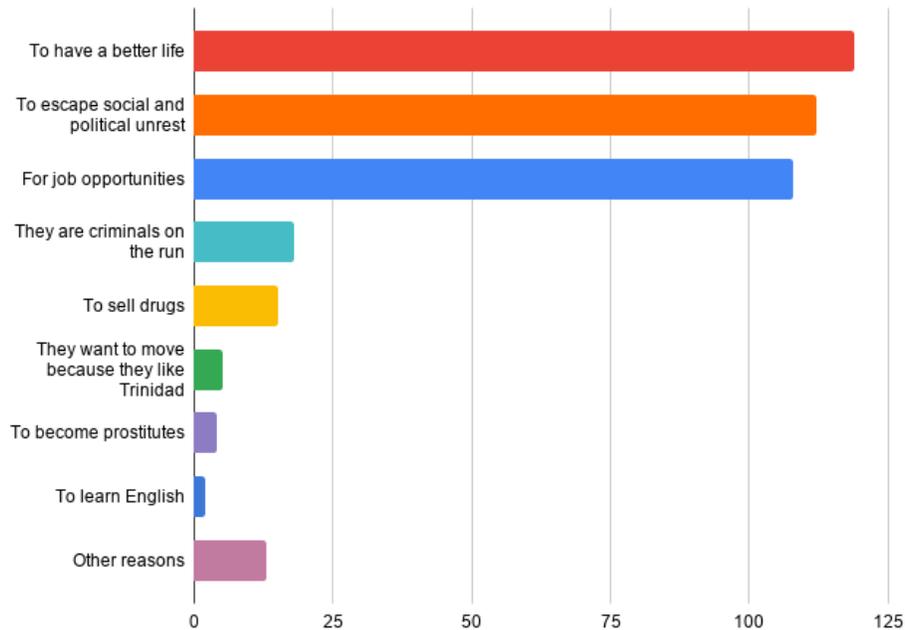


Fig. 2. Graph indicating reasons why Venezuelans migrate to Trinidad and Tobago according to participants.

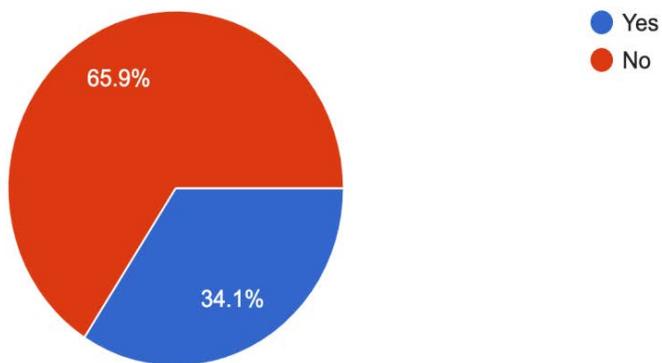


Fig. 3. Pie chart showing response to the question : Have you witnessed any instance of ill-treatment of Venezuelan migrants?

Most of the participants(65.9%) affirmed that they have witnessed instances of ill-treatment. However, the remainder of participants (34.1%) responded in the negative.

### *Attitudes/Perceptions towards Venezuelan Men*

This section is broken up into themes which are further broken down into sub-themes to explore the positive, neutral and negative attitudes towards the Venezuelan migrants. The responses acquired and discussed are as follows.

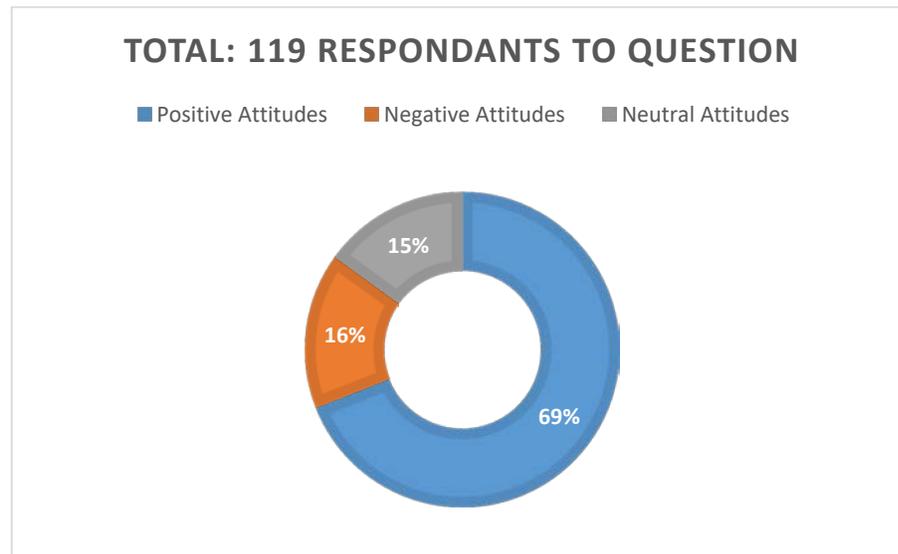


Fig. 4. Responses to question: In general what is your opinion of Venezuelan Men?

#### **Theme 1 : Positive Attitudes**

The major positive attitudes towards Venezuelan men as identified by the participants are discussed under four sub-themes: hardworking, family oriented, survival and good-natured.

Sub-theme 1: Hardworking(39%)

Under this subtheme, participants expressed the following views :

“They work really hard. Anywhere for example a construction site you see two to three Venezuelans helping out and they take the jobs that the citizens don’t want.”

“They Work Harder Than Trinidadian Men.”

This was the most common positive attitude towards Venezuelan men.

Sub-theme 2: Family oriented (13/119, 11%).

A number of participants expresses that the migrants do what they can for their families.

This is evidenced in the following statements by participants:

“Natural providers for their families and they deserve any chance at a steady income for they are hard workers.”

“I think that they are also hardworking and again, will do whatever it takes to provide for their families.”

Sub-theme 3: Survival(14/119, 12%).

The following statements elaborated upon this notion:

“ Most of them will do any work in order to survive.”

“I think they are also here to make money in any way possible and they may not fall into the right kind of business but again they are doing it to survive.”

Numerous participants have explained that these migrants are trying to survive given their circumstances. This common attitude suggests that they are willing to do anything.

Sub-theme 4: Good-natured, friendly, helpful(9/119, 7%).

Some of the participants convey that they have had pleasant experiences with the male migrants. The statements revealing this opinion included the following:

“They are very cool people. I play basketball with a number of them and they showcase very good team work [sic] characteristics, which from a psychological perspective, demonstrates that they are relatively easy to get along with. They are very friendly and EXTREMELY hard-working. I enjoy talking, working and laughing with them just as much as I do with everyone else.”

“They are friendly and down to earth.”

**Theme 2: Neutral Attitudes**

Some of the participants(18/119, 15%) expressed a very neutral response to the question. Hence, their attitudes were neither positive nor negative as can be observed in the following statements:

“ I view them in the same way that I view Trinidadian men”

“ I believe the same for Venezuelan man [sic]. They’re humans just like everyone else and don’t deserve the harsh insults thrown at them. We don’t know them or their background so until proven corrupt, they should be treated equally.”

**Theme 3 : Negative Attitudes**

Some of the participants’ responses were negative in nature. These are portrayed under the following sub-themes and views of the respondents:

Sub-theme 1: Vulnerable to exploitation (2/119, 2%)

“Vulnerable to exploitation from ill-intentioned Trinbagonians.”

“Underpaid.”

Sub-theme 2: Unpleasant (4/119, 3%)

“Some are also very disrespectful, and can appear shady/untrustworthy.”

“They barely have humanity towards their own brothers in Venezuela what makes you think they genuinely have it towards a Trinidadian.”

Sub-theme 3: Aggressive nature (4/119, 3%)

“Some are hardworking fathers trying to take care of their families while others are short tempered.”

“They are very skilled but can be aggressive at times.”

Sub-theme 4: Lack of work ethic (2/119, 2%)

“Men, helpful and kind. Boys, seem very lackadaisical.”

“They are lazy.”

Sub-theme 5: Criminal Activity (7/119, 6%)

“Some men resort to stealing send [sic] petty crimes as a way to get by.”

“They are harder workers than most Trinidadian men, however they may fall prey into[sic] Trinidad’s illegal world in order to make a living.”

“some Venezuelan men surround themselves with the wrong company, increasing the crime in that particular area.”

Other minor themes included: disrespectful, untrustworthy, unkempt, arrogant.

### *Attitudes/ Perceptions towards Venezuelan Women*

This section is also broken up into themes followed by sub-themes which highlight the positive, neutral and negative attitudes towards the Venezuelan women. The responses of the participants are as follows.

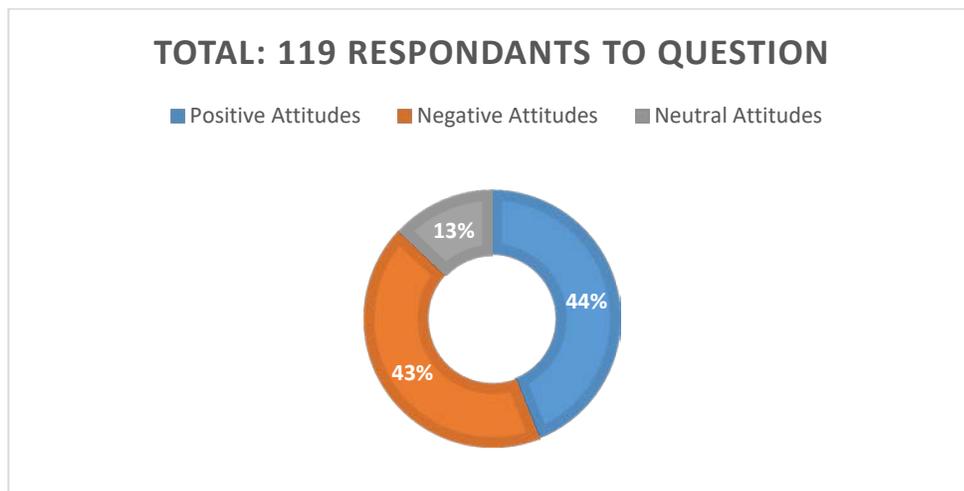


Fig. 5. Responses to question: In general what is your opinion of Venezuelan Women?

#### **Theme 1 : Positive Attitudes (44%)**

The positive attitudes are divided into the following sub-themes, giving examples of the participants' views.

Sub-theme 1:Hard-working (18/119, 15%)

“Hard working people wanting to put food on their table.”

“I see no issue with them. That [sic] are hardworking and try to make an honest living.”

“They are hardworking and it’s unfortunate that they probably have to compromise themselves to live comfortably.”

Sub-theme 2:Survival (17/119, 14%)

“They are doing what they feel is necessary to survive in a foreign country.”

“I believe they are here trying to get a better life and while we judge what they do to make money, they are doing so as there is a demand for it and this is how they have to survive.”

“They are admirable and only seeking a means to survive.”

Sub-theme 3:Attractive (9/119, 8%)

“They are beautiful and tend to attract the attraction of Trinidadian men.”

“They are very beautiful with well-shaped figures.”

“They are very beautiful friendly and hardworking.”

Sub-theme 4:Good-natured (5/119, 4%)

“I generally have a very positive attitude towards and opinion of them, the few with whom I have previously interacted were very kind, open and respectful to me.”

“Majority of them are sweethearts. They are very loving and kind, at least the lot of them that I talk to and have interacted with in the future. They are also very hard-working and I admire that about them.”

Sub-theme 5:Family oriented (4/119, 3%)

“Venezuelan women are hardworking and family oriented.”

“Like every other woman circumstances may affect their life choices, they are hardworking and they do all they can to mind their family.”

“I think that they are hardworking and will do whatever they have to do to survive and provide for their families.”

The themes revealed in the positive attitudes towards women were almost identical to that of the male migrants. Contrarily, attention was paid towards the physical features of the women.

**Theme 2 : Neutral Attitudes**

Some of the participants(15/119- 13%) displayed neither positive nor negative attitudes towards the migrant stated in the following statements:

“No particular opinion.. Venezuelan women have always been around and will always be around just like every other woman.”

“I have a neutral view of Venezuelan women . I admire their bravery and strength with regards to risking their lives for the sake of a so called better life . However I also pity their desperation and the poor treatment that they receive both here and in Venezuela.”

### **Theme 3 : Negative Attitudes**

Many of the participants responded negatively to the question. These negative attitudes were broken down even further into sub-themes which revealed the following statements from the respondents.

#### Sub-theme 1:Vulnerable to exploitation (14/119, 12%)

“ I also think that Trinidadian men take advantage of them in some ways, and that they also take advantage of the he men [sic] here for their benefit but I feel a bit more sorry for them because if their economic situation was not this way, they probably would not be with these men as frequently.”

“It saddens me that they are extremely vulnerable to exploitation as there are many reports of them being treated negatively.”

“They are exploited more than men and are forced to work in the not most [sic] favourable fields.”

#### Sub-theme 2:Discrimination and Sexual objectification (19/119, 16%)

“They are women like any other woman in the world but they are all stereotyped as prostitutes.”

“I feel sorry for Venezuelan women in Trinidad because they are constantly harassed and taken advantage of almost anywhere they go. It’s hard being a women already and the fact that they are migrants adds to their difficulty in Trinidad and Tobago’s society.”

“They are objectified, abused and severely mistreated by Trinidadian men and woman [sic] alike.”

Participants indicated that many of the women are viewed as objects and are discriminated against not just for being a migrant but also for being female.

Sub-theme 3:Immoral (9/119, 8%)

“They look for easy ways to get money, a lot of them go into prostitution because of how bad they need the money.”

“Some are hardworking mothers trying to put food on the table for their children while others maximize on their vulgar culture for personal gain.”

“None really but they show too much skin (seems as is their culture) and they talk toooo damn much even on their phones in a taxi.”

Some of the respondents stated that the Venezuelan women are vulgar, lack morals, and are often inappropriately dressed to attract sexual attention.

Sub-theme 4:Unpleasant (4/119, 3%)

“They are as pretty as they say. not sure about their attitude.”

“Some have potential, some are decent humans and most feel they are superior to Trinidadians.”

“Some of them are quite hostile towards Trinidadian women.”

Sub-theme 5:Ill-mannered (5/119, 4%)

“They are disrespectful.”

“They will resort to illegal and immoral means to the extent of breaking up other homes and marriages.”

“Many are loud and disrespectful, some are polite, genuine and hardworking.”

Hence, the attitudes highlighted in this section were broken down into major themes and sub-themes, and revealed the most descriptive responses to relate to each theme. Positive, neutral and negative attitudes were recorded and revealed themes such as: hardworking, attractive, family-oriented, good-natured, as well as vulnerable to exploitation, criminal activity and immoral among other attitudes.

*Concerns of the Trinbagonian Citizens*

This section has explored the data collected from the 118 of 123 participants who responded to the question: In general, what are some of your concerns with regards to the influx of Venezuelan migrants? These concerns were categorized under very pertinent themes as expressed and exemplified in the following statements:

**Theme 1:Violation of Human rights/Discrimination/Ill-treatment**

“Chaos in society and ill-treatment of Venezuelan people[.]Many of the children are not being sent to schools which would impact them negatively. Venezuelans are being trafficked and no one does anything although we know it happens because the population is against them.”

“Additionally, the lack of social integration and the language barrier. Many Trinbagonians cannot speak Spanish and as such sometimes things can get lost in translation. I firmly believe that if Trinbagonians understood Spanish and were able to connect with migrants, they [sic] would be a lot more understanding and cooperation and positive attitudes towards migrants.”

**Theme 2: Economic strain on the country and citizens of Trinidad/ Limited resources**

“The availability of resources and the management of the situation by the relevant authorities.”

“We have taken in a lot of Venezuelan migrants and our little country is at capacity especially with the pandemic, not only are we in great risk health wise they do not pay taxes and are able to access our free healthcare etc. it becomes a burden now on Trinidadians who are paying their taxes.”

**Theme 3: The ongoing Pandemic and the rise in COVID-19 cases / Spread of Illnesses**

“Because of our current dilemma with regard to the pandemic, because our borders are closed and they are coming in illegally, they can bring disease with them which is risky for our population. In addition, our economy is struggling and financially I’m not sure we can handle much more.”

“My main concern is that their fear of being deported causes them to avoid coming to health centres if they feel sick and cause a surge in cases of COVID.”

**Theme 4: Criminal Activity**

“The rise in criminal gangs/activity and drugs on the market. As well as their discipline to adhere to our rules and regulations. I see so many of them carelessly walking around on the streets without a mask like they don't care.”

“The gangs that are reported to be entering the country whether legally or illegally and increasing the level of criminal activity in our already extremely dangerous country.”

Many of the citizens’ concerns stem from the negative perceptions and attitudes towards the migrants. Other concerns included illegal migration and overpopulation.

### *Citizens’ Treatment of Venezuelan Migrants*

Participants generally explored the negative treatment of the migrants. This dominant perspective was broken down into themes. This treatment is made evident in the following statements:

#### **Theme 1:Exploitation**

“Trinidadians take advantage of the fact that they are here for a better life. They consider them a cheaper workforce to do jobs that will cost much more for a local labour force to do. Also, many Venezuelans don’t have an authority to complain to about their ill-treatment as some of them came here illegally.”

“They are forced to accept menial jobs, face abuse and threats of deportation.”

#### **Theme 2:Discrimination**

“A Venezuelan lady tried to buy something at a drug store I was at and she was forced to leave because the owner did not want “venes” because “they cause too much trouble”.”

“People have attached a negative stigma when it comes to simply saying “Venezuelans”. Some people are scornful when they see them, saying that they are dirty. Etc.”

**Theme 3:Language barrier**

“Men are made fun of due to their language and the way that they speak.”

“Persons tend to become frustrated when communicating with Venezuelan immigrants and proceed to speak to or shout at them with an attitude that may come across as though they are belittling them.”

**Theme 4:Objectifying of women**

“Women being heckled and viewed as only an object.”

“Many businesses hire them for way less than minimum wage because they know that the migrants desperately need the money. Venezuelan women are also taken advantage of because of the notion that they’re all involved in prostitution.”

**Theme 5:Abuse/Violence**

“I have seen an employer of a renowned establishment in the food and beverage industry, verbally abuse a Venezuelan national. I informed him that it was inhumane and took my business elsewhere.”

“Human trafficking, refusal of basic human rights, refusal of contractual rights, extortion, assaults.”

The attitudes of Trinbagonians towards the migrants have undoubtedly influenced the kind of treatment that the migrants receive. In this case, mainly the negative attitudes.

## CHAPTER 3

### Discussion of Findings

This research examined the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. It also shed light on the reasons for their migration, the most serious concerns of the citizens as well as the treatment of said migrants. In the previous chapter, the researcher presented the most significant findings. This chapter seeks to synthesize the data collected regarding the Venezuelan migration, with reference to other sources that report in the field.

The concept of migration is not new in Trinidad and Tobago and so question five of the questionnaire required the participants to express their attitude towards the Venezuelan immigration, thereby revealing that the majority of the population was neither for nor against. Some participants clearly responded in the negative and some in the affirmative (see Fig. 1 and Table 2). This contrasts with the review of literature which revealed that the response of the Trinbagonians is mainly a negative one as evidenced by their attitudes and treatment of the migrants.

#### *Reasons for the Venezuelan Migration*

The results indicate that the main reasons why the Venezuelans migrate are: a) to have a better life, b) to escape social and political unrest, c) to obtain job opportunities. The analysis of Avila Hernández (2018) coincides with the findings as the author states that an increase in migration stems from the desire to access better healthcare services, to achieve better education, to obtain employment and generally to improve their quality of life. It is even stated that some are forced out of their countries due to a social or political situation that may pose threats to their

livelihood. Unlike the findings, Avila Hernández has not indicated the following as major reasons for migration: the selling of drugs; to become prostitutes; they are criminals on the run; to learn English; they like Trinidad, among other reasons (see Fig.2)

### *Attitudes towards the Venezuelan Migrants*

The research was divided into positive and negative attitudes and further broken down by gender- attitudes towards male vs female migrants. The study found that the attitudes towards men were mainly positive. The participants expressed that the male migrants are very hardworking, family-oriented, focused on their survival and are good-natured, friendly and helpful. The findings also illustrated that few respondents indicated a neutral stance, expressing that they have not had enough interaction to be able to give a response, or they view them in the same way they view all men (see Fig.4)

In contrast, the negative attitudes revealed in the findings of this research are: they are vulnerable to exploitation, unpleasant, aggressive, lack work ethic and are involved in criminal activity. Other less evident attitudes were that the migrants are arrogant, unkempt, disrespectful and untrustworthy. Very little to no research has been conducted on this topic regarding negative attitudes towards male migrants. Hence, given that the sources mainly suggest negative attitudes towards the female migrants, the review of literature does not support these findings concerning male migrants.

Concerning the attitudes towards the female migrants, there was a close tie between the negative and positive attitudes, leaving neutral attitudes with only few respondents (see Fig.5). The positive attitudes included: hardworking, survival, attractive, good-natured and family oriented. This is assured by Alexander who expresses that the migrants are very hardworking and

skilled and some are even university graduates or qualified. It is not clear whether or not she refers to both male and female Venezuelan migrants in this claim (Alexander). Contrastingly, the female migrants were met with negative attitudes such as exploitation, discrimination and sexual objectification, they are immoral, unpleasant and ill-mannered. This correlates with the article by Stabroek News (2019) which points out that according to the migrants, Trinbagonians cannot understand that Venezuelan women can have normal and respectable occupations. In fact, it is stated that the Trinbagonian men have the perception that the Venezuelan women are all prostitutes and are only interested in sexual relations. There is constant degradation of the female migrants.

The findings which revealed these negative attitudes, build on existing evidence that the female migrants are sexually objectified, exploited and accused of being immoral. This is corroborated by Alexander (2019) who explains that they are involved in prostitution. Scruggs (2018) also supports this claim. The findings contribute to a clearer understanding of Lall's (2021) article, which explains that many Venezuelan women have complained of exploitation and attitudes of disrespect by citizens and immigration officials upon arrival to Trinidad and Tobago. It is expressed that there exist many stereotypes of female migrants which try to dictate their lives in the twin island Republic.

The findings, which revealed positive attitudes towards women such as hardworking and skilled, is not reflected in the review of literature. In fact, the literature revealed mainly negative attitudes, with female migrants as the main targets.

*Concerns of the Trinbagonian citizens*

The limited resources and the economic strain on the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago were among the major concerns revealed in the responses to the questionnaire. This is evidenced by Christopher (2019) who reported that there are many migrants and the country is too small to host these migrants while caring for the needs of the citizens. Wilkinson (2020) confirms this indicating that with more than 50,000 Venezuelan migrants on the island, citizens are concerned about the availability of resources. Alexander (2019) also questions the fact that the Venezuelan migrants are obtaining jobs while the Trinbagonians are being denied these opportunities.

The findings also indicated that citizens are concerned that there is a violation of human rights, discrimination and ill-treatment of the Venezuelan migrants. According to Tillotson (2020) who supports this claim, Trinidad and Tobago has placed more emphasis on border security than on its human rights commitments. He explains that different faith-based organisations and NGOs have made efforts to assist the migrants while the Trinidadian government has not.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the rise in criminal activity, to which the migrants contribute, is a strong concern. In line with the article by Boodoosingh (2019), Trinidadians worry about increased criminal activity in a country where crime is already an issue. He talks of prostitution, human trafficking and gangs being factors that contribute to increased crime levels. Just as the respondents would have indicated, “the gangs that are reported to be entering the country whether legally or illegally and increasing the level of criminal activity in our already extremely dangerous country,” this concern is elevated as citizens feel like their government is not doing anything about it. Alexander (2019) also supports the research that crime through prostitution is having negative effects on the families of Trinidad and Tobago.

The respondents have also expressed concern over the ongoing pandemic and the rise in COVID-19 cases as well as the spread of illnesses. This finding was somewhat unexpected as, due to its newness, the COVID-19 pandemic was not thought to have had a significant impact on the attitudes and perceptions of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants.

### *Treatment of the Venezuelan Migrants*

The findings show that the majority of citizens have witnessed the ill-treatment of the Venezuelan migrants (see Fig.3). Additionally, according to the findings, the treatment of the migrants is generally negative. Recurring themes in the literature review include: exploitation, lack of respect for human rights, stereotyping of female migrants and the general abuse and discrimination of the migrants.

This study has revealed very similar themes with regard to the treatment of Venezuelan migrants. There was evidence of exploitation according to the respondents. This is consistent with Alexander (2019) who noted that the migrants are overworked and underpaid and due to being hardworking, dedicated and trying to make a living, they have no choice but to accept this treatment. Along these lines, Lall (2020) also confirms the notion of exploitation stating that the migrants are being evicted from homes as they are unable to pay exorbitant rents. He also states that they are not paid fairly and they work longer hours, as indicated in the findings of this study. Themes of discrimination, abuse and violence have also been identified in this study which correlates with Mohan (2019) who states that they are prone to exploitation, discrimination and abuse. He also mentions abuse by police, unprovoked violent attacks by citizens and rapes of women.

Another very important finding in this research is the objectification and sexualization of the Venezuelan women. This is linked to the research of Raghbir et al. (2020) who indicate that Venezuelan women are trafficked and corruption plays a vital role in the exploitation of these women. This is also evident in the article by Mohan (2019) who discusses that Venezuelan women are generally sexualized and this attitude, along with other discriminatory and xenophobic attitudes, has increased. This correlates with the theme of discrimination, as presented in the findings.

Furthermore, the respondents have also indicated that the migrants are struggling with the language barrier which corresponds with Alexander (2019) who states that the language barrier presents many obstacles for them. Concerning the treatment of the migrants on a humanitarian level, Martinez (2019) suggests that a lack of legislation and policies leave room for a violation of human rights where they are denied access to work and education. Teff (2019) calls out this humanitarian crisis, further indicating that they do not even have access to protection and services. However, this is not revealed in the responses to the questionnaire.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the attitudes of Trinbagonians towards Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. It involved participants from across the country and was not limited to age, gender or any other demographic factor. This study was conducted using quantitative and qualitative data. The main findings of this research indicated that attitudes towards Venezuelan migrants ranged from positive, negative and neutral. Attitudes towards the male migrants were significantly more positive and explored attitudes such as hardworking, family oriented, survival and good-natured, whereas the negative attitudes revealed that they are unpleasant, aggressive, lack a work ethic, contribute to the rise in criminal activity and are vulnerable to exploitation. Conversely, the negative and positive attitudes towards the female migrants were shared. They were displayed as hardworking, trying to survive, attractive, good-natured and family oriented while also being exploited, immoral, discriminated against, sexually objectified, unpleasant and ill-mannered.

The findings also indicated Trinbagonians' major concerns in response to the influx of migrants and the citizens' treatment of said migrants, which proved to be mainly negative. The themes highlighted with regard to the citizens' treatment were that of exploitation, discrimination, the language barrier, the objectification of women, and abuse and violence towards the migrants. The concerns generally bordered around the themes of: the economic strain and the lack of resources, the ongoing pandemic and the spread of illnesses, the violation of human rights and the rise in criminal activity.

The conclusions drawn from the findings of this research can be useful in the understanding and improvement of the general response to the ongoing phenomenon of

migration. It can aid in identifying key problems regarding reasons, attitudes, concerns and treatment, and the seeking of measures to provide solutions and educate the public.

### *Limitations*

The method of distribution of the questionnaire was not ideal. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it proved very difficult to collect data. Questionnaires had to be distributed via *Google* forms and therefore, it may not have been easily accessible to everyone, as opposed to physically approaching participants and handing out questionnaires to be filled. Additionally, the distribution may have influenced the participant demographic as it would be randomly sent to friends, family and so on. This may answer the question as to why there was such a huge disparity between male and female respondents. Interviews were not chosen as a method of data collection due to the prohibition of social gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other constraints. Regarding the review of literature, it proved very difficult to source research on negative attitudes towards male migrants due to the absence of research conducted on this topic.

### *Recommendations*

According to Borgonovi et al. (2019), it is necessary to explore the dynamics of citizens' opposition to migration and the role of education in the reconfiguring of these oppositions. This may be a good way to improve the attitudes towards the Venezuelan migrants or migrants in general. More research can be done on the economic factors like competition in the labour market and non-economic factors like racial intolerance and prejudice that affect the host countries' attitudes towards migrants (Borgonovi).

Future research could be done on a larger scale perhaps with more than one Caribbean country to make further, more in-depth generalizations and observations in the field.

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## APPENDIX A

Questionnaire- online distribution via *Google* forms

HUMN 3099: Caribbean Research Project-Attitudes towards Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago

Dear participant,

My name is Sapphire Sookram and I am currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and French, at The University of the West Indies. This research is being conducted for the purpose of completing my HUMN 3099 Caribbean Research Project and its objective is to observe and closely study the attitudes of Trinidadians towards the Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago. All information collected from this study will be used SOLELY for the purpose of exploring an issue that affects our society. I assure you that all responses are strictly confidential and hence, will remain completely anonymous. I humbly ask that in doing this questionnaire, you provide honest and full responses in order to ensure accuracy. This survey will take approximately ten (10) minutes of your valuable time. Thank you in advance for your participation in completing this questionnaire.

Sapphire Sookram

---

SAPPHIRE SOOKRAM

Link to Questionnaire:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSddE3VpyWFRgbStOTDjOmckGc3YGx0jhiNI5XbH0K-0y98-wg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSddE3VpyWFRgbStOTDjOmckGc3YGx0jhiNI5XbH0K-0y98-wg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Questions:

1) What is your gender?

Male

Female

2) What year were you born in ?

---

3) What is your occupation?

---

4) What part of Trinidad and Tobago are you from? Please just state the area.

---

5) Are you in favour of or against Venezuelan immigration?

In favour

Against

Neutral

6) What do you think are some of the reasons why Venezuelan migrants come to Trinidad and Tobago? Tick all that apply

To escape social and political unrest

To sell drugs

They want to move because they like Trinidad

To become prostitutes

To have a better life

For job opportunities

They are criminals on the run

Other \_\_\_\_\_

7) Do you think that Venezuelans increase the level of criminal activity in Trinidad and Tobago?

Yes

No

8) How would you deal with a migrant that does not speak English?

Help him/her

Ignore him/her

Make fun of him/her

Try to communicate using signs and gestures

Other

9) Have you witnessed any instance of ill-treatment of Venezuelan migrants?

Yes

No

10) If you have responded "Yes" to the question above, please provide more details.

---

11) Do you think Venezuelan migrants are exploited?

Yes

No

12) If you have responded "Yes" to the question above, please provide more details.

---

13) Do you think Venezuelan migrants should be deported whether legal or illegal?

Yes

No

14) With relation to the question above, do you think being deported goes against their human rights?

Yes

No

15) Do you think the Venezuelan migrants put a strain on the resources available to Trinidadian citizens? Explain.

---

16) In terms of job competition between migrants and Trinidadian citizens, do you think that the Venezuelan migrants :

Occupy jobs that Trinidadian citizens do not want

Occupy jobs that Trinidadian citizens want

Other \_\_\_\_\_

17) In general, what are some of your concerns with regards to the influx of Venezuelan migrants?

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18) In general what is your opinion of Venezuelan women?

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19) In general what is your opinion of Venezuelan men?

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## APPENDIX B

Table. Areas in which participants reside in Trinidad and Tobago

Area	Female	Male	Total
Arima	3		3
Arouca	2		2
Barataria	1	1	2
Central	4	1	5
Chaguanas	5	2	7
Couva	2	2	4
Crown Point, Tobago	3		3
Cunupia		1	1
Curepe	1		1
Debe		1	1
Diego Martin	4	2	6
East	1		1
Enterprise	1		1
Fyzabad	1	3	4
Gasparillo	1	1	2
Les Coteaux	1		1
Maraval	2		2
Mt Lambert	1		1
Penal	3		3
Piarco	1		1
Point Fortin	7	1	8
Port of Spain	5		5
San Fernando	18	3	21
San Juan	3	1	4
Sangre Grande	4		4
Santa Cruz		1	1
Siparia	9	7	16
South	3	1	4
St James	1		1
St. Augustine	1		1
Trincity		2	2
Tunapuna	3		3
West	1		1
Williamsville		1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>123</b>

## APPENDIX C

Table. showing responses to question: What is your occupation?

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>n</b>
Administration Assistant	3
Application Analyst	1
Banking and finance	1
Business Owner	1
Compliance officer	1
Doctor	1
Energy Data Officer	1
Engineer	4
Entrepreneur	1
Field Assessor	1
Homemaker	1
Housewife	2
HR Manager	1
HSSE Advisor	3
IT Consultant	1
IT Technician	1
Jr Accountant	1
Landlord	1
Lawyer	1
Maintenance	1
Manager	3
Marketing Officer	1
Materials Clerk	1
Materials Officer	1
Mechanical engineering & Maintenance	1
Nail Technician	2
Network Engineer	1
Paralegal	1
Part time tutor	1
Pharmacist	2
Safety specialist	1
Sales Representative	1
Security officer	2
Self employed	2
Special Ed	1
Statistical Officer	1
Store manager	1
Student	53
Student/Teacher	1
Teacher	7
Teacher's Assistant OJT	1
Trainee Engineer/mechanic	1
Tutor/Teacher	1
Unemployed	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>

## APPENDIX D

### More participant responses to questionnaire

#### *Attitudes towards Venezuelan Men*

#### **Positive**

##### Sub-theme 1: Hardworking

“The hand full [sic] that I have encountered have been hardworking.”

“I think they are hardworking and very willing to help others.”

##### Sub-theme 2: Family oriented

“They are very dedicate [sic] and try their best to provide for their families.”

“They are family oriented.”

##### Sub-theme 3: Survival

“They are hardworking and very respectful. Willing to do anything to make a dollar.”

“They will do anything to gain money.”

##### Sub-theme 4: Good-natured, friendly, helpful

“I have one friend in particular and I must say he's really sweet. He begged me to teach him English in exchange for Spanish lessons. The others I've interacted with often smile when they see me. Therefore, from my perception they're quite pleasant.”

“I know one personally and he is an amazing person . Very respectful and kind.”

#### **Neutral:**

“I do not have enough experience with them to answer”

“I am also indifferent towards them. I do not discriminate or treat them any differently”

**Negative:**

Sub-theme 1: Vulnerable to exploitation

“Business owners take advantage of their vulnerability by paying low wages.”

Sub-theme 2: Unpleasant

“Hard workers but very stand offish due to the treatment from our country.”

Sub-theme 3: Aggressive nature

“Same as women however they are more aggressive.”

Sub-theme 4: Lack of work ethic

“Good workers but sometimes lazy.”

Sub-theme 5: Criminal activity

“kind of sketchy.”

*Attitudes towards Venezuelan Women*

**Positive**

Sub-theme 1: Hardworking

“Very hardworking.”

“I recognise that they are hardworking.”

Sub-theme 2: Survival

“They are just trying to survive and have every right to occupy space in our country.”

“They are mostly willing to do anything to survive.”

“Required to do what is necessary to make a living.”

Sub-theme 3: Attractive

“Beautiful, hardworking creatures.”

“Pretty.”

Sub-theme 4: Good-natured

“They are friendly and down to earth.”

“They are very helpful and kind.”

Sub-theme 5: Family oriented

“Beautiful, hardworking, family oriented.”

**Neutral:**

“Haven't spent met [sic] enough or spent time around enough Venezuelan women to form an opinion.”

**Negative:**

Sub-theme 1: Vulnerable to exploitation

“Venezuelan woman are women who should be afforded the same opportunities as Venezuelan men provided they are here legally and are not exploiting loop holes [sic] in international law and legislation to arrive in country [sic] illegally. Once here legally they should be allowed the same opportunity to access work. However, consideration should be made to limit foreign exchange drain.”

Sub-theme 2: Discrimination and Sexual objectification

“They are stereotyped as prostitutes because of their bodies and they are objectified but i [sic] see them as normal human beings.”

“I think that Venezuelan women have less opportunities than the men and thus result in more desperate and socially ostracized means to gain an income.”

“Vulnerable to abuse by ill-intentioned Trinbagonian men and women.”

“Even the hardworking ones are stigmatised as prostitutes.”

### Sub-theme 3: Immoral

“There are certain stereotypes that Venezuelan women are trying to ‘steal’ Trinidadian men away from their spouses. I do not know any Venezuelans but I know that regardless of whether or not this is true for some, the reasoning behind their actions must be examined (eg they may be doing so because they have no means of income etc).”

### Sub-theme 4: Unpleasant

“Majority of them is [sic] boldface [sic] individuals.”

### Sub-theme 5: Ill-mannered

“Loud and obnoxious.”

## *Concerns of the Trinbagonian Citizens*

### **Theme 1: Violation of Human rights/Discrimination/Ill-treatment**

“Racism.”

“The rights of the immigrants being violated.”

“Perhaps the treatment of the children by authorities and the general population.”

### **Theme 2: Economic strain on the country and citizens of Trinidad/ Limited resources**

“The main concern that I have is the overall quality of life of Trinidad being hindered as the country adapts to the influx of these migrants.”

### **Theme 3: The ongoing Pandemic and the rise in COVID-19 cases / Spread of Illnesses**

“I am concerned that Covid may never go away. With the virus rampant in Venezuela, the incoming of illegal Venezuelans put Trinidadians at an [sic] even more at [sic] risk of contracting the virus.”

### **Theme 4: Criminal Activity**

“The criminals that come in illegally and also in the current pandemic, since some are entering illegally, there is the possibility of some spreading the virus. They need to be monitored carefully to ensure they are not establishing underground criminal links to Venezuela for the purpose of trafficking drugs, humans or ammunition.”

### *Citizens' Treatment of Venezuelan Migrants*

#### **Theme 1: Exploitation**

“I went to get a service done for my vehicle and the owner of the company treated the Venezuelan help terribly, shouting at him and embarrassing him in front of customers. He then got a Trinidadian to do my tinting service. A few days in, I realized the job was botched and went back. He immediately assumed it was the Venezuelan and started speaking to him in a threatening manner and I had to stop him and let him know he was not responsible for that job.

Needless to say, I will never visit that company again.”

“There may be Venezuelans who are qualified to work for more money than they are paid or to do jobs more complex than they are hired to do but they tend to get simple or low income jobs due to their struggle.”

**Theme 2: Discrimination**

“Discrimination on language , mimicry of Venezuelans, abuse on work while manipulating language barrier.”

**Theme 3: Language barrier**

“Lack of patient [*sic*] by native English speakers when Venezuelan immigrants try communicating with them. It's really heart-breaking to see.”

**Theme 4: Objectifying of women**

“Harassment of women on streets as well as making fun of their accents.”

**Theme 5: Abuse/Violence**

“Paid less, abused on work, Kong [*sic*] work hours and not the best conditions. No access to education nor policies for asylum and residency for those refugees.”