



## NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

# Confronting Caribbean Challenges

Dear Readers,

It has been some time since we sent out the last CCC Newsletter. We've done a lot since then, as you will read in the reports below. While it is too early to start summarizing the results of the CCC-project, we are already in the goodbye phase. Wouter Veenendaal officially left the CCC team almost a year ago to pursue another research project at Leiden University – fortunately, as you will read, he did not abandon us entirely. Malcom Ferdinand proved to be a worthy replacement for Wouter, writing and preparing a number of important publications on governance and ecological issues – but he too had to leave us recently when his contract expired. He will be taking up a new position in France at the prestigious Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). Finally, Jessica Roitman is in her final months at the CCC project, having completed amazing research on the social history of Sint Maarten, Sint Eustatius, and Saba – and the wider Atlantic – and publishing a large number of articles and essays. We are not saying a final goodbye to them, though, and our readers will not miss out on their research. We are still looking forward to host of forthcoming articles and books by Jess, Malcom, and Wouter in the near future, many of which are at least partially based on their work in the CCC project.

This leaves Stacey Mac Donald, Sanne Rotmeijer, and me. Stacey and Sanne are now both in the enormously demanding last phase of their work in the CCC project - writing up their doctoral theses. Just read what they themselves have to say about this – and about their many additional admirable and inspiring activities. As for me, with Malcom and Wouter, I co-authored a paper entitled '[Non-sovereign territories: A global comparison](#)', which Wouter and I presented in June both at the [Caribbean Studies Association \(CSA\)](#) conference in Havana and at the [International Small Islands Studies Association \(ISISA\)](#) on Terschelling, one of the Netherlands' small barrier islands. I also presented a keynote talk at the ISISA conference entitled, '[Small-scale, insularity and \(non\)sovereignty: postcolonial legacies and practices in governance](#)', and, again with Wouter, [a slightly provocative talk](#) at the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Affairs. One of the points I make in these talks is that the Netherlands should take responsibility to combat climate injustice within the *entire* Dutch Kingdom. This is was one the many lessons I learned from the CCC project...

Enjoy reading the Newsletter – we're not finished yet!

Best wishes,

Gert Oostindie



### Update sub-projects

The four researchers give an update on their individual sub-projects.



### Picture compilation



*Jessica researches the social history of the Dutch Leeward (confusingly known as 'Bovenwinden' in Dutch) islands of St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, and Saba in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Her focus is on the intersection of migration, governance, and the formation of identities on these islands. The project will also tie into larger discussions about (intra) Caribbean migrations, hybridity, and the disjuncture between sovereignty and identities.*

## Update project: Jessica Vance Roitman

It's hard to believe that my part of the CCC project will be coming to an end in a few short months. My sub-project will officially end in September. That's not to say that there won't be a few more publications coming out. In fact, there will be a couple of chapters in edited volumes and various journals that will be published in the Fall of 2018 or in early 2019. Future CCC newsletters will highlight these works as they become available.

Speaking of publications, I just had an essay published on Dutch colonization on the so-called 'Wild Coast' (contemporary Suriname, Guyana, and French Guyana) in the seventeenth century. It's entitled, "Second is best: Dutch colonization on the 'Wild Coast' in the seventeenth century" and is in Lou Roper, ed., *The Torrid Zone: Colonization and Cultural Interaction in the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, May 2018), 61-75. While it's not about Statia, Saba, or St. Maarten in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it does explore the origins of Dutch attitudes and approaches to Caribbean colonization – the legacies of which can be seen even today. Unfortunately, it's not available in Open Access, but I'm more than happy to send a copy of it to anyone who is interested. Just send me a message at [Roitman@kitlv.nl](mailto:Roitman@kitlv.nl) and I'll forward on a PDF.

In the meantime, I've been busy collaborating with the Mongui Maduro Library and Archive on Curaçao. This wonderful institution is publishing a new book in which they highlight the various important parts of their truly special collections, particularly their documentation relating to the centuries' old Jewish community on Curaçao and their rich and varied collection of Papiamentu language journals, newspapers, books, grammars, and even unpublished works by well-known authors. I was asked to put the book together, and we are hoping to have a final version out by the end of this year or early next year.

At the Caribbean Studies Association's meeting in Havana, this June, Wouter and I presented a paper called 'Worlds Apart' in which we discussed the tension between regional Caribbean identities and (post) colonial national affiliations.

## Update Project: Wouter Veenendaal

June has clearly been conference month! Along with Jessica, Sanne and Gert, I travelled to Havana to attend the Caribbean Studies Association conference during the first week of June. Jessica and I presented a paper on inter-island connections, rivalries, and (post)colonial political structures in the Dutch Caribbean – a paper which we soon hope to submit for publication in an academic journal. In addition, I presented a paper co-authored with Malcom and Gert, in which we examined all fifty-five non-sovereign territories in the world, aiming to discover why some territories appear to be satisfied with their non-sovereign status while others have antagonistic relations with the metropolises or are even yearning for independence from their former colonial power. Gert and I also presented the latter paper at the International Small Island States Association (ISISA) conference on Terschelling one week later. The paper is the outcome of the third year of the sub-project Malcom and I worked on, and, therefore, also brings this sub-project on small-scale, non-sovereignty, and governance to a close.

In addition to the conference, my article on politics and governance on the three public entities (or special municipalities) of Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba was published in *Beleid & Maatschappij* (in Dutch). This article is based on field research and semi-structured interviews that I conducted on all three islands between June 2015 and June 2016. While most academic analyses of the Dutch Caribbean islands adopt a metropolitan perspective, and therefore highlight the relations between the Netherlands and the Dutch Caribbean islands, this article zooms in on local political dynamics on each of the three islands, which have been strongly influenced by their small scale, insular geographies, and (post-) colonial histories. Using these conditions as explanatory factors, the article discusses some of the common political dynamics in these three islands, but also foregrounds some of the important differences between them. The article is available online via [https://tijdschriften.boombestuurkunde.nl/tijdschrift/benm/2017/4/BenM\\_1389-0069\\_2017\\_044\\_004\\_002.pdf](https://tijdschriften.boombestuurkunde.nl/tijdschrift/benm/2017/4/BenM_1389-0069_2017_044_004_002.pdf).



*Wouter's research focuses on the impact of the new municipal status of the smallest Dutch Caribbean islands on the opinions and behavior of local citizens, civil servants, and politicians. The project also draws comparisons with the larger Dutch Caribbean islands and other non-sovereign island jurisdictions in the Caribbean and elsewhere.*

## Update project: Sanne Rotmeijer



*Sanne's research focuses on how traditional and new 'Dutch' Caribbean media reflect and shape discourses of (trans)national identities in the context of non-sovereignty, migration and small-scale politics.*

Currently, my main activity is writing and working toward completing my dissertation, which I plan to finish at the end of 2018. In addition, I have been, and will continue to be, busy with several other activities. In April, I published my first scientific article; ['Words that work? Practices of constructive journalism in a local Caribbean Context.'](#) The article is the outgrowth of a presentation I gave during a conference about constructive journalism in Brussels in 2016. In addition to summarizing my overall anthropological research on news cultures on Curaçao and St. Maarten, this article is, first and foremost, a critique of the concept of constructive journalism. I argue that to understand what constructive journalism *means* and *does* the particular context – in this case St. Maarten – should be taken into account.

During Irma's aftermath I have (co-)contributed to the public debate in online and print Dutch media. Together with [Jordi Halfman](#) (University of Amsterdam), I published a short piece in *de Volkskrant*: ['Gelijkwaardig Koninkrijk moet het doel zijn van wederopbouw Sint Maarten'](#), in September 2017. One month later, I wrote the blog ['The Privilege to inform and be informed in post-Irma St. Maarten'](#). In February 2018, I was one of the signatories to a letter in *de Volkskrant*: ['Werk samen en maak het hele Koninkrijk gelijkwaardig'](#). And later that month I did an interview on journalism and the elections in St. Maarten for *BNR Nieuwsradio* (listen [here](#) from 23:30 minutes).

Last October, I presented a paper on language and belonging in Curaçaoan news media at the *Language in Media Conference* in Cape Town. This June, I presented a paper on news cultures in Curaçao and St. Maarten at the *ISISA conference* (Terschelling).

In October 2018, I will (co-)organize the workshop; 'Academic research in a decolonizing world: towards new ways of thinking and acting critically?' at the KITLV and Leiden University. Together with prominent international scholars we will explore what concepts of 'de/coloniality' and 'postcolonial' mean for current critical scholarship and education (more info soon).

## Update Project: Stacey Mac Donald

Like Sanne, my focus lies in writing up my dissertation, which is due in the Spring of 2019. Since our last newsletter which was published in October of last year, I have spent most of my time collaborating with the [World Wildlife Fund, the Netherlands \(WWF-NL\)](#) on a project concerning the fisheries sector on Bonaire. I spent three months working closely with fishermen on Bonaire, helping them set up a fisheries cooperative called [PISKABON](#). This was a [big achievement](#) for the fishermen on the island.

Currently, I am working on the final corrections for the research report for WWF-NL. In an article I wrote for the [Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance newsletter](#) you can read more about my work with the fishermen on Bonaire. In addition to presenting my findings on how to achieve sustainable fisheries in the Caribbean Netherlands to the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and other stakeholders, I presented this research during the [ISISA conference](#) on Terschelling. The paper focuses on the way the low levels of trust that are so common throughout the world in conservation conflicts are intensified by the colonial history of Bonaire. It also discusses this distrust in the context of current tensions within the government since the constitutional changes of 2010, and takes into consideration factors such as high levels of immigration. I illustrated my argument by highlighting my collaboration with the WWF-NL and the fishermen on Bonaire in our joint quest for sustainable fisheries.

Besides writing, I also made several appearances in the media in the Netherlands – albeit on topics that are bit extraneous in terms of the main focus of my research. I talked about animal abuse and animal rights in the Caribbean with Xaviera Ringeling on [NPO 1 -Koningrijkswesties \(episode 4\)](#) and again in April during a live radio debate ['NTR-Kwesties'](#).

For the past three months, together with Gert and Wouter, I supervised an intern, [Lisanne Corpel](#), who conducted an analysis of nature and environmental policy in the Dutch Caribbean based on online databases. Specifically, she examined how responsibilities regarding nature and environmental management in the Dutch Caribbean were distributed within Kingdom over the past decades. Lisanne is currently doing fieldwork on St. Maarten and Saba. She's conducting interviews with stakeholders who are concerned with the local environment. If you see her, say "Hi!"



*Stacey is interested in uncovering behavioral differences between/ within Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius when it comes to nature conservation. She will use identity principles to explain the dynamics of locals and immigrants who are active in conservation of nature on Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius.*

# Update Project: Malcom Ferdinand



*Malcom conducts comparative research on the Dutch Antilles and other small-scale, non-sovereign territories in the Caribbean, as well as other parts of the world. He explores the extent to which contemporary relationships with the respective metropolitan powers shape local political conflicts, affect modes of governance, and impact current ecological preservation efforts.*

My article on climate change and the French non-sovereign territories entitled 'Subnational climate justice for the French Outre-mer: Postcolonial politics and geography of an epistemic shift' has finally been published in the *Island Studies Journal*. It is part of a thematic issue on small islands' perspectives on climate change, and all the articles are, happily, available in Open Access at <https://www.islandstudies.ca/node/528>

My article, as well as all the other contributors' pieces, emphasize the need to pay attention to the specific vulnerabilities, as well as the struggle for climate justice, on small islands throughout the world. The destruction wrecked upon Puerto Rico, Dominica, and Sint Maarten/Saint-Martin in September 2017 by hurricanes reminded everyone of the precarious situations faced by both non-sovereign and sovereign Caribbean islands in relation to climate change. As hurricane season is again upon us, I rejoice in noting some of the alliances made by non-sovereign and sovereign territories. Of course, the mutual relief efforts in 2017, and the traditional practice of sending teams of doctors, firefighters, and humanitarian workers reminded us of the strong solidarity Caribbean islands have with their immediate neighbors, across (post) colonial boundaries. This was precisely the point Jessica and Wouter made in their CSA presentation. More importantly, I find hope in the decision by these territories to be proactive in mitigating climate change as seen, for instance, by the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2018, the OECS launched their regional climate change implementation plan. In this plan, they introduced small steps to reduce emissions and improve resilience to climate change impacts. This is a plan in which the non-sovereign territories of this organization (Martinique, the British Virgin Islands, and Montserrat) join hands with the other member states. Finally, with Gert and Wouter, and supported by the wonderful work of our interns Dio Tobing and Mattia Steardo, I worked on a joint article that was first presented at the CSA conference in Havana. Unfortunately, I couldn't be there.

A final word. My time in KITLV has come to an end. It has been a very fruitful and enriching experience to me. I feel very grateful to have met and worked with great colleagues and at a very vibrant institute. I would like to extend once again my deepest thanks.

