

Artikel: Forgotten decolonisation experiences. Comparing the decolonial trajectories of the French and Dutch Caribbean

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Abstract: This article explores European experiences of decolonisation through examining and comparing the decolonisation trajectories of the French and Dutch Caribbean. These ‘remnants of empire’ are often neglected in scholarship on the history of European decolonisation, but actually present many fruitful opportunities for researching European experiences of decolonisation. While the French and Dutch Caribbean decolonisation experiences are very similar in their broad outlines, they also diametrically oppose one another due to radically different metropolitan approaches, shaped by the many differences of their colonial pasts and decolonial paths. In addition to showing the value of affording the Caribbean more importance in research, this article also calls attention to how government- and policy-focused current research on the topic in question is. It pleads for further research taking into account not only government views and stances, but those of citizens, too.

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FORGOTTEN DECOLONISATION EXPERIENCES

COMPARING THE DECOLONIAL TRAJECTORIES OF THE FRENCH AND DUTCH CARIBBEAN

Annick Gossen

Some decolonisation experiences haunt former empires more than others. Conflicts like the Algerian War (1954-1962) and the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949) left deep scars on colonised and coloniser that are still felt and incite fierce debate today. But who talks about Europe's quiet 'remnants of empire' – the decolonisation process of territories that aren't even independent today?

During the twentieth-century decolonisation, European metropolises shed their overseas empires either willingly or with great reluctance. But not every former colony became independent. These 'remnants of empire'¹ include an eclectic mix of islands in the Caribbean that are still bound to various European metropolises today. Unfortunately, they are still often overlooked in academic research on European countries' decolonisation histories. They have traditionally been perceived as 'marginal' and their decolonisation trajectories as 'anomalous'. Yet, historian Grace Carrington has shown in her PhD thesis that the French and British Caribbean territories are much more embroiled in their metropolises' (de)colonial histories and the global decolonisation era context than previously thought and should therefore not be excluded from consideration.²

Adopting Carrington's stance that paying attention to the Caribbean region yields valuable insights, I set out to show how approaching these non-sovereign territories in a comparative perspective

can contribute to better understandings of European decolonisation experiences. The question of how Caribbean remnants of empire feature in European decolonisation experiences is a neglected topic, even though the similar-yet-very-different decolonial trajectories of different parts of the Caribbean provide an excellent basis for comparison. As the scope of this paper only allows for an examination of two out of three European colonial powers retaining Caribbean territories—France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands—I have chosen to focus on continental Europe. I will trace the French and Dutch approaches to and experiences with the French and Dutch Caribbean respectively during the decolonisation period and beyond, highlighting key similarities and differences in the process.

I will also call attention to often overlooked perspectives regarding European decolonisation experiences in another way. The European experiences documented in the historiography thus far are very government-oriented, with researchers Gert Oostindie and Inge



Map of the Caribbean. Saba and Sint Eustasius are not depicted. Map from Wikimedia Commons.

Klinkers noting in their work on Dutch Caribbean decolonisation that ‘the average Dutch citizen plays no role of importance’.³ When analysing European decolonisation experiences, however, metropolitan citizens’ attitudes to their remnants of empire may actually be worth exploring. This article will therefore make a case for its importance.

The French Caribbean: ‘Frenchmen-with-a-difference’

Today, the French Caribbean, defined in this article as the French West Indies, consists of four islands: Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy.⁴ In colonial times, these islands contained many large plantation estates where enslaved Africans, taken from French West Africa, were forced to work. These enslaved and displaced African peoples, as well as ruling French Europeans and a significant group of mixed-race ‘creoles’ joining the fray throughout the centuries, would form a population that developed distinct cultures and languages of their own. This history and population makeup allowed France to pursue more assimilationist

policies in the French Caribbean than in its other colonies, where assimilation attempts clashed with pre-established cultures.⁵

France’s approach to its Caribbean islands continued to be marked by assimilation, with Antilleans receiving French citizenship and the right to parliamentary representation in France after slavery’s abolishment in 1848. By 1945, French Caribbean political structures and social institutions closely resembled those of metropolitan France. The people of the Caribbean islands, believing full departmentalisation would benefit them most, voted to become departments of France proper in 1946. Metropolitan France itself, aiming to preserve its overseas territories and with them its sense of being a powerful player on the international stage, found this desirable. Thus, while France would soon be caught up in Indochinese and Algerian independence struggles, such struggles were absent in its Caribbean territories, leading to a very different decolonial path here for France and the Caribbean alike.⁶

Decolonial developments in the wider French empire, however, would

greatly influence France's approach to the French Caribbean. First of all, they caused unrest in the Caribbean islands.⁷ The intellectual *Négritude* movement, for instance, was born from and resonated across the francophone African diaspora and translated into demands for primarily cultural sovereignty on the Caribbean islands. Secondly, the French-Algerian War greatly impacted France's Caribbean

disappeared due to this continued assimilationist and integrationist approach. Though calls for more autonomy are still present, the current status quo is perfectly acceptable to France. Yet, despite this strong assimilation and integration and even the foreign press considering French Antilleans French citizens in every shape or form, metropolitan Frenchmen do not always see them that way. The racial

'THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ANTILLEAN FRENCH FACE IN THEIR DEPARTMENTS AND FRANCE PROPER SHOW THEY ARE OFTEN CONSIDERED 'FRENCHMEN-WITH-A-DIFFERENCE' AT BEST.'

approach. Many Antilleans served in this war and left it disillusioned with French colonialism. This led to increasing calls for less assimilation and more autonomy upon their return home, with independence movements influenced by the war and tied to Algerian leadership rising. This link between Algeria and the Caribbean can also be spotted in the writings of Martinican postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), whose experiences all over the French empire informed his condemnation of the French colonial system and his striving for both Caribbean and Algerian independence.⁸

Desperate to preserve its remaining Caribbean territories in light of the Algerian War, the French repressed Caribbean nationalism and started an aggressive development and integration campaign in the 1960s and 1970s, hoping that turning the Caribbean islands into 'modern societies with the highest standards of living in the region' would quell secessionist tendencies. This further intensified metropolitan integration. French government programmes also lured Antillean migrants to the metropole for labour purposes, bringing them into the France proper's folds in large numbers. By the early 1990s, voices clamouring for Caribbean independence had virtually

disappeared Antillean French face in their departments and France proper show they are often considered 'Frenchmen-with-a-difference' at best.⁹

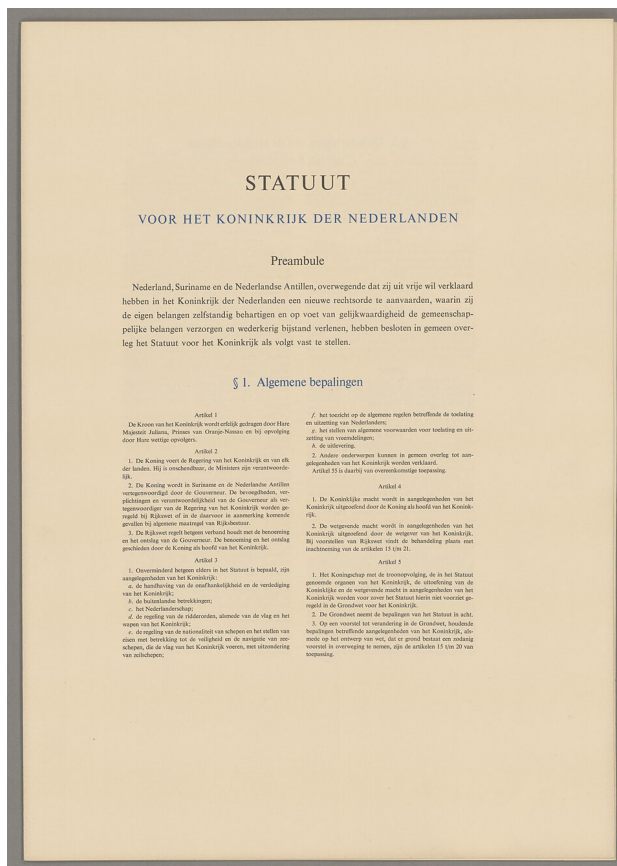
As I have shown, France's approach to its Caribbean territories has been thoroughly shaped by its colonial past, but also by the decolonisation experiences of both the metropolitan and Caribbean French. The French Caribbean should therefore not be neglected when documenting French decolonisation experiences. The French decolonisation experience as traced through France's Caribbean approach is marked by strong beliefs in the necessity of preserving France's great power status through keeping hold of as many overseas territories as possible. It also stemmed from powerful anxieties of losing them, fuelled by decolonial developments all over the empire.

Still, the decolonisation experience traced here is rather governance-focused, whereas European decolonisation experiences encompass more than just governmental attitudes. A more comprehensive documentation of French decolonisation experiences should also seek to recapture metropolitan citizens' experiences. The Caribbean, as a remnant of empire the French public is confronted with still, lends itself very well as a case study for

examining decolonisation phenomena and (de)colonial policymaking. More specifically, it can show these have influenced and continue to influence metropolitan citizens' attitudes and thinking about decolonisation processes and the former colonies involved. Especially in the information age, more and more opportunities to tackle this may be found and, if more detailed work on uncovering historical attitudes and thinking is done, it will become possible to gain better insights into continuity and change.

Currently, research on how the decolonisation period and the French policy approach to the French Caribbean have influenced (present-day)

metropolitan thought on the territories has not been done. Work containing glimpses into past metropolitan citizen attitudes to the French Caribbean is also scarce, though some reading between the lines allows for tentative insights. Historian Alain Ruscio uses polls to show that French public opinion was not very concerned with events happening outside the metropole. The French Union, which the French Caribbean was part of, was not high up on a 1953 list of what metropolitan French considered important questions or problems, and in an earlier 1949 poll, seventy-six percent of respondents could not define the French Union correctly. This suggests that the average metropolitan French citizen's attitude to



Page of the 1954 Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands); Nationaal Archief, 2.02.20 Inventaris van het archief van het Kabinet der Koningin, 1946-1975 (1985), inv.nr 13685 Statuut van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 15 december 1954.

and thoughts about the French Caribbean was shaped by ignorance and apathy. However, the French Union question was still seen as 'most important' by twelve percent of polled respondents. Caribbean questions may also have been considered 'domestic problems' by some: Martinique and Guadeloupe were departments of France proper, after all, and Algerian War testimonies collected by Alexander, Evans and Keiger show a French tendency to view their departments and the people living there as truly French, at least before being personally confronted with difference. Finally, postcolonial migration from the Caribbean also confronted metropolitan French with 'Frenchmen-with-a-difference'. Kristen Stromberg Childers' work on Caribbean migration focuses on the migrants themselves, but also sheds light on (often discriminatory) French attitudes towards them. Studying French attitudes to and thoughts about postcolonial Caribbean migrants may also contribute to a better understanding of French attitudes to and thinking about the Caribbean and the decolonisation processes taking place there.¹⁰

All this implies that attitudes to and thoughts about the French Caribbean cannot have been non-existent during the decolonisation period. Historians must be able to recover them, which could deepen understanding of the impact of (de) colonial experiences today.

The Dutch Caribbean: always in second place

In a comparative analysis of European decolonisation experiences, the Dutch Caribbean¹¹ provides a great foil for the French Caribbean. Both are Caribbean remnants of empire with complicated relationships to their metropolises and the Dutch Caribbean's colonial past resembles that of the French. Though not necessarily plantation colonies, the Dutch Caribbean islands became vital connection points for Caribbean regional trade. Population-

wise, most islands were inhabited by a majority of enslaved Africans, a European minority and arising mixed-race groups. Yet, the Dutch approach to the Caribbean differed from the French in both colonial and decolonial times, with Dutch prime minister Willem Drees (1886-1988) explicitly rejecting the French Caribbean approach as a model in 1952, calling it 'completely unrealistic' and leading to 'incalculable difficulties'.¹² Consequently, the overall Dutch Caribbean decolonisation experience has also differed from the French in significant ways, making the prospect of comparatively studying the effects these policies had on metropolitan citizen attitudes to the Caribbean territories extra promising. The Caribbean case study, in this regard, brings the impact of different decolonisation trajectories on modern-day attitudes to empire and its remnants into the limelight like no other.

The Dutch Republic, unlike France, never adopted a visionary or assimilationist approach to its Caribbean islands in its colonial past. The islands simply had much less economic potential compared to the Dutch East Indies, which the Netherlands saw as far more lucrative and important for the Dutch Empire. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Dutch East Indies became an essential contributor to the Dutch treasury, while Suriname and the Caribbean islands proved themselves financial liabilities, even prompting regular suggestions that these territories be pawned off to another state. In the interbellum, however, companies like Shell and Esso would boost the oil industry in the Dutch Caribbean and make the islands more lucrative in the process. The Dutch focus remained on the East Indies regardless.¹³

The Dutch Empire's decline began with the Dutch East Indies declaring independence in 1945. After a bloody and internationally controversial war, the Netherlands recognised this independence in 1949. Yet, the war and

mounting international pressure to decolonise did not result in a strong Dutch desire to dismantle the rest of an empire still contributing to a certain sense of international prestige. That said, the situation did show the Netherlands that metropole-colony relations ought to change to better suit a decolonising world. Previously, the Netherlands had proposed a postcolonial federal union in hopes of keeping Indonesia within its imperial fold, which ‘accidentally’ gave the remaining colonies an opportunity to gain more autonomy. Though Dutch public interest and emotional investment in decolonisation and the remaining colonies were incredibly low after the loss of the Dutch East Indies, Suriname and the Caribbean now finally came ‘first’ in Dutch (de)colonial policymaking. In 1954, the *Statuut* – a legal-political agreement between the Netherlands and its remaining colonies – officially ended Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean’s colonial status: Suriname and the ‘Netherlands Antilles’ became autonomous constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Emphasising autonomy, the *Statuut* can be seen as more progressive and decolonial than the assimilationist French approach. This relative progressiveness can be explained by a Dutch desire for international ‘redemption’ following criticism of the bloody war in Indonesia.¹⁴

All seemed well until, in 1969, Dutch marines restoring order after riots on Curaçao would see the Dutch facing accusations of neocolonialism in international media. The Netherlands subsequently spent the early 1970s until the late 1980s trying hard to dismantle its empire. Suriname became independent in 1975, albeit half-heartedly, but despite the metropolitan Dutch government also pressing for Antillean independence, the Dutch Caribbean refused this for a variety of reasons. These included the islands’ small size – which presented bleak socio-economic and socio-political prospects if

left to fend for themselves – vulnerability to natural disasters and high standards of living under Dutch rule compared to independent Caribbean countries.¹⁵

Oostindie notes that, from an Antillean perspective, ‘independence’ had already been obtained in the form of self-determination in 1954. That self-determination allowed the Dutch Caribbean to choose non-sovereignty unless the alternative appeared more beneficial. This clashed with Dutch politicians’ desire to dispose of its remnants of empire. Metropolitan politicians saw and criticised the Caribbean as a ‘financial burden’ and feared an influx of Antillean migrants coming to the Netherlands proper in ways reminiscent of the Surinamese post-independence influx. ‘Complete decolonisation’ not necessarily being synonymous with ‘independence’ also proved hard for them to comprehend and accept. Come the 1990s, however, metropolitan politicians became willing to accept that the Dutch Caribbean was there to stay. At the root of this about-face, according to Oostindie, was the fact that Dutch governments saw the Antillean presence as a nuisance, but a nuisance so minor the Dutch could simply not be bothered to continue wasting time and effort on pushing for Caribbean independence fruitlessly. Combined with considerations of the geopolitical interests of countries like the US, this made the Dutch government officially give up on trying to impose full independence. The Netherlands has subsequently reinvigorated its presence in and involvement with Caribbean affairs.¹⁶

Comparison

The U-turn of the Dutch government’s attitude means the Dutch and French approaches to their Caribbean territories are increasingly starting to resemble each other in terms of involvement with Caribbean affairs. This has become even more apparent after the 2010 dissolution

of the Netherlands Antilles as a unitary constituent country (*constituerend land*), after which Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius became special municipalities of the Dutch metropole.¹⁷ Yet, there are still significant differences to be found.

Though France has a long tradition of upholding its own prestige through financially aiding the French Caribbean and its citizens, the Netherlands has

dubbed 'genocide by substitution' in his criticism of French cultural assimilation policies. Thus, whereas French Antilleans may not always feel entirely French, Dutch Antilleans often do not consider themselves Dutch at all.¹⁹

Within the Caribbean territories themselves, the differences between the French and Dutch approaches are seen and felt by locals as well. This comes to

'ONLY IN RECENT DECADES HAS THE NETHERLANDS BEGRUDGINGLY ACCEPTED ITS REMNANTS OF EMPIRE, WITH THE DUTCH APPROACH SLOWLY STARTING TO RESEMBLE THE FRENCH ONE.'

never seen the Dutch Caribbean as very important and subsequently sees Caribbean development aid as an frustrating consequence of its failure to shake these colonial remnants off. Furthermore, while both the French and Dutch Caribbean have long histories of metropolitan migration, France's strong ties with the Caribbean and its assimilationist policies have led to more culturally assimilated Caribbean migrants being seen as relatively valuable as opposed to other migrant groups.¹⁸ The Netherlands, on the other hand, after experiencing an Antillean migrant influx in the 1990s, seriously considered finding ways to restrict Caribbean migration because of more substantial integration issues than encountered in France. Finally, French language and culture are widespread in the French Caribbean, while Dutch language and culture have never been dominant throughout the Dutch Caribbean's colonial history, contributing to a greater cultural distance between former colony and metropole. On the flipside, the Dutch Caribbean islands have traditionally enjoyed a greater degree of (cultural) autonomy and a stronger cultural identity, reducing the risk of what Aimé Césaire (1913-2008), one of the founders of the Négritude movement,

the forefront in Francio Guadeloupe's interview with an SXM (Saint Martin/Sint-Maarten) disc jockey: DJ Shadow criticised both the French and Dutch, but pointed out that the French were 'helping out more' and being 'fair', whereas in his eyes, the Dutch were not putting enough effort into actually regulating problems in the Dutch Caribbean. DJ Shadow does notably seem to perceive Antilleans as Dutch here, though he may be invoking the 'Dutchness' of Dutch Antilleans pragmatically.²⁰

The Dutch Caribbean de-colonisation experience is very similar to the French experience in its broad outlines, but the specifics of the Dutch colonial past and decolonisation trajectories in other parts of the Dutch empire resulted in an approach diametrically opposed to the French one. Whereas France has always worked hard to keep the French Caribbean close, losing Indonesia and a stronger sense of pressure from an increasingly decolonising world caused Dutch governments to give the Dutch Caribbean more autonomy earlier on, eventually even pushing to force independence upon a pragmatically disinterested population. Only in recent decades has the Netherlands begrudgingly accepted its remnants of empire, with the Dutch approach slowly

starting to resemble the French one.

As with the French case, however, the decolonisation experience traced here is still very focused on government stances. The average Dutch citizen's decolonisation experience is not at the forefront of narratives produced, as the citation from Oostindie and Klinkers mentioned at the beginning of this article shows. Lammert de Jong, former resident-representative of the Dutch government in the Netherlands Antilles, does briefly touch upon changing perceptions of the Dutch Caribbean and its inhabitants among metropolitan Dutch throughout the decades. In the early post-Statuut days, the Dutch Caribbean remained mostly out of the public eye. Not much was known about the Dutch Caribbean and its peoples: they were primarily viewed positively as fascinating and exotic. After the migrant influx of the 1990s, however, the growth of Antillean communities in the Netherlands rife with unemployment and crime turned this positive image into a more negative one.²¹

In both cases, postcolonial migration emerges as a way to get metropolitan attitudes into view. However, more information is still necessary to sketch a more complete image of European citizens' Caribbean decolonisation experiences. In a comparative perspective, the French and Dutch Caribbean lend themselves to this cause exceptionally well: the many crucial similarities and differences between these territories provide fruitful soil for examining how decolonial policies and their wider decolonisation contexts have affected how metropolitan Europeans view their remnants of empire and how this view has changed throughout the years.

Conclusion

Non-sovereign Caribbean territories of former European empires are often still left out of decolonisation narratives. The Caribbean territories, however, challenge scholars to think about alternative

conceptions of decolonisation in which deliberately choosing non-sovereignty is valid as well. I have shown in this article that territories like the French and Dutch Caribbean are firmly entrenched in their metropolises' colonial pasts and the broader context of (inter)national decolonisation experiences. The French and Dutch approaches and attitudes to their Caribbean territories were profoundly shaped by their respective (de)colonial pasts, the consequences of which are still felt in Europe and the Caribbean alike. Accounts of European decolonisation experiences, therefore, should not exclude them from decolonisation narratives, nor in the analysis of the legacies of (de)colonisation today.

Finally, for examining European decolonisation experiences comparatively, the French and Dutch Caribbean's decolonial trajectories present research avenues with untapped potential. The decolonisation experiences traced here are still very political in nature, with experiences and views of average European citizens remaining under the surface and shrouded in generalisations. Even while the similar-yet-different Caribbean decolonial trajectories may have produced very different experiences among metropolitan citizens as well. Seeking to uncover how present-day metropolitan citizens' attitudes to Caribbean remnants of empire have been influenced by the (de)colonial policymaking of the past and how these attitudes have changed through time may be a valuable contribution to the wider project of documenting European decolonisation experiences. Herein lie many opportunities for further research.

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Eindnoten

- 1 Term borrowed from M.J. Parsons, 'Remnants of empire', in: M. Thomas and A. S. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the ends of empire* (Oxford 2017) 678-697.
- 2 W.F.S. Miles, 'Comparative decolonization. French West Africa, French Caribbean, French India', *Contemporary French civilisation* 14:2 (1990) 212-213; G. Carrington, *Non-sovereign states in the era of decolonisation. Politics, nationalism and assimilation in French and British Caribbean territories, 1945-1980*, PhD dissertation (London 2019) 13-14, 252, 257.
- 3 G. Oostindie and I. Klinkers, *Decolonising the Caribbean. Dutch policies in a comparative perspective* (Amsterdam 2003) 228.
- 4 Martinique and Guadeloupe are currently overseas departments of France, while Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy are overseas collectivities. The collectivities, however, were administratively part of Guadeloupe until 2007. Because this has been the case for most of the time period discussed here, my look at the French Caribbean primarily focuses on Martinique and Guadeloupe.
- 5 Miles, 'Comparative decolonization', 212-213, 215-216.
- 6 Miles, 'Comparative decolonization', 215-217; Oostindie and Klinkers, *Decolonising the Caribbean*, 11; K.S. Childers, *Seeking imperialism's embrace. National identity, decolonization, and assimilation in the French Caribbean* (Oxford 2016) 1-2. As a side note, the Martinican poet and politician Aimé Césaire, also one of the founders of the *Négritude* movement, was himself a champion of full departmentalization, though he would quickly grow disillusioned with this after its actual implementation (see Childers, 2).
- 7 Miles, 'Comparative decolonization,' 223.
- 8 F. Fanon, 'Algeria face to face with French torturers', in: Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African revolution. Political essays* (New York 1988) 74-82; N. Galoustian, 'Paths to decolonization in the French Caribbean. Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon', *Caribbean Quilt* (2012) 148
- 9 R. Price and S. Price, 'Museums, ethnicity and nation-building. Reflections from the French Caribbean', in: G. Oostindie (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Caribbean. Essays in honor of Harry Hoetink* (Amsterdam 2005) 81-82; G. Oostindie, 'Ethnicity, nationalism and the exodus. The Dutch Caribbean predicament,' in: G. Oostindie (ed.), *Ethnicity in the Caribbean. Essays in honor of Harry Hoetink* (Amsterdam 2005) 209; H.M. Hintjens, 'Governance options in Europe's Caribbean dependencies. The end of independence', *The round table. The Commonwealth journal of international affairs* 86:344 (1997) 533-547, retrieved from [https://web-p-ebsohost-com.proxy.uba.uva.nl/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=58e31a30-ec88-4437-ac56-549e7646783f%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=9710102674&db=aph](https://web-p-ebsohost-com.proxy.uba.uva.nl/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=58e31a30-ec88-4437-ac56-549e7646783f%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=9710102674&db=aph; Oostindie and Klinkers, <i>Decolonising the Caribbean</i>, 37-38, 41; L. de Jong and D. Kruijt (eds.), <i>Extended statehood in the Caribbean. Paradoxes of quasi colonialism, local autonomy and extended statehood in the USA, French, Dutch and British Caribbean</i> (Amsterdam 2005) 189; Carrington, <i>Non-sovereign states in the era of decolonisation</i>, 38, 255-256. For more detailed insights into how Caribbean migrants fared in metropolitan France, see chapter 7 ('Migration flows and the politics of exclusion') in K.S. Childers, <i>Seeking imperialism's embrace. National identity, decolonization, and assimilation in the French Caribbean</i> (Oxford 2016).10 A. Ruscio, 'French public opinion and the war in Indochina, 1945-1954', in: M. Scriven and P. Wagstaff (eds.), <i>War and society in twentieth-century France</i> (New York 1992), 121; M.S. Alexander, M. Evans and J.F.V. Keiger (eds.), <i>The Algerian War and the French army, 1954-62: Experiences, images, testimonies</i> (Basingstoke 2002) 225, 240, 249-250.11 The Dutch Caribbean consists of six islands: Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Eustatius, Saba and St. Maarten.12 Oostindie and Klinkers, <i>Decolonising the Caribbean</i>, 57-61, 80-81.13 Oostindie and Klinkers, <i>Decolonising the Caribbean</i>, 57-61. The East Indies remained more important to the Dutch government due to their still-higher economic value, significantly larger population and very likely because it had already been the most 'celebrated' colony for centuries. A detailed comparison between the Dutch government's attitude to its eastern and western colonies lies beyond the scope of this article, but may present a fruitful avenue for further research.14 Oostindie, 'The Dutch Caribbean in the 1990s', 104; Oostindie, 'Ethnicity, nationalism and the exodus', 210; Oostindie and Klinkers, <i>Decolonizing the Caribbean</i>, 64-65, 72-75, 80-81; De Jong and Kruijt (eds.), <i>Extended statehood in the Caribbean</i>, 86.15 Oostindie, 'The Dutch Caribbean in the 1990s', page 109; Oostindie, 'Ethnicity, nationalism and the exodus', 211; G. Oostindie, 'The Dutch Caribbean in the 1990s. Decolonization or recolonization?' <i>Caribbean affairs</i> 5:1 (1992) 103-104; Hintjens, 'Governance options in Europe's Caribbean Dependencies', retrieved from <a href=).
- 16 Oostindie, 'The Dutch Caribbean in the 1990s', page 110-112; Oostindie, 'Ethnicity, nationalism and the exodus', 221; Hintjens, 'Governance options in Europe's Caribbean dependencies', retrieved from <https://web-p-ebsohost-com.proxy.uba.uva.nl/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=58e31a30-ec88-4437-ac56-549e7646783f%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=9710102674&db=aph>.
- 17 However, it should be noted that the Dutch approach to the special municipalities so far crucially differs from the French one to its Caribbean departments. The islands had been hoping to gain better social welfare benefits, rising living standards and improved services from their new states, similar to what France has been doing for its Caribbean territories, but the Dutch government has instead prioritized implementing socio-moral legislation to more closely resemble that of the metropolitan Netherlands, much to islanders' dissatisfaction. On the other hand, this criticism resembles that posed by Aimé Césaire when full departmentalisation failed to live up to expectation in Antillean eyes. W.P. Veenendaal, 'The Dutch Caribbean municipalities in comparative perspective', *Island studies journal* 10:1 (2015) 19, 22, 24.

- 18 As a sidenote, the politico-institutional approach to Caribbean migration may not necessarily correspond to metropolitan citizen attitudes as evidenced by Childers' chapter on Caribbean migration and the discriminatory attitudes found there, further underscoring the need to study government and citizen decolonization experiences alike.
- 19 Hintjens, 'Governance options in Europe's Caribbean dependencies', retrieved from [SKRIPT HISTORISCH TIJDSCHRIFT](https://web-p-ebshost-com.proxy.uba.uva.nl/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=58e31a30-ecc8-4437-ac56-549e7646783f%40redis&bd ata=JnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=9710102674&db=aph; Oostindie and Klinkers, <i>Decolonizing the Caribbean</i>, 172, 175, 178, 189, 196, 201-202, 213; L. de Jong, 'The Kingdom of the Netherlands. A not so perfect union with the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba', in: L. de Jong and D. Kruijt (eds.), <i>Extended statehood in the Caribbean. Paradoxes of quasi colonialism, local autonomy and extended statehood in the USA, French, Dutch and British Caribbean</i> (Amsterdam 2005) 107-108. For more detailed information on postcolonial and Antillean migration to the Netherlands, consult H. van Amersfoort and M. van Niekerk, 'Immigration as a colonial inheritance. Post-colonial migrants in the Netherlands, 1945-2002', <i>Journal of ethnic and migration studies</i> 32:3 (2006) 323-346.</p>
<p>20 F. Guadeloupe, 'Introducing and anti-national pragmatist on Saint Martin & Sint Maarten', in: L. de Jong and D. Kruijt (eds.), <i>Extended statehood in the Caribbean. Paradoxes of quasi colonialism, local autonomy and extended statehood in the USA, French, Dutch and British Caribbean</i> (Amsterdam 2005) 167.</p>
<p>21 De Jong, 'The Kingdom of the Netherlands,' 106-107.</p>
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