

Rose Mary Allen ~ The Complexity Of National Identity Construction In Curaçao, Dutch Caribbean



Willemstad

Abstract: Curaçao currently stands at a crossroad of constitutional reform. In the context of these changes at the political level, it is logical that national identities are being redefined and repositioned. The developments in the fashioning of national identities in Curaçao deserve attention locally but also regionally. How do people in Curaçao construct national identities in daily life? How is a national collective constructed on the one hand, and how are differences with other collectivities constructed on the other hand? The historical context of constitutional changes that have occurred over the years is considered as well as an examination of the present discourse on constitutional reform. These identity issues are then placed within a wider Caribbean context. *Keywords:* constitutional changes, construction national identity, Curaçao, diaspora, cross regional analysis.

Curaçao, one of the five islands of the Dutch Caribbean federation called the Netherlands Antilles, currently stands at a crossroad of constitutional reform. In this new context, Curaçaoan notions of national¹ identity are being re-examined, reconstructed and reclaimed. In Curaçao, discussions about national identity are centred on the concept of Yu di Kòrsou. Translated from the local Creole language Papiamentu, this literally means: Child of Curaçao. In the debate about identity, the crucial questions are: Who is a Yu di Kòrsou and who is not? What characterizes the Yu di Kòrsou and, by extension, what is authentic Curaçaoan

culture and what is a 'good' Yu di Kòrsou?

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