

Wouter Veenendaal ~ Smallness And Status Debates In Overseas Territories: Evidence From The Dutch Caribbean



While non-sovereignty is often presented as a rational and pragmatic political status option, this paper asserts that the smallness of overseas territories in various ways obstructs and distorts the formation of an informed local public debate about this political status. Due to personalistic politics, patron-client relations, excessive executive dominance, and the lack of professional media, which all are consequences of a small population size, the extent to which citizens of overseas territories are involved and represented in status debates is limited. The paper uses the 2010 political reforms of the Dutch Caribbean islands as an illustrative case study, to show how the smallness of these islands has obstructed a balanced consideration of status options among the population.

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