THE COST AND BENEFITS OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE DUTCH CARIBBEAN[1]
by
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A workshop on 'Costs and benefits of independence in the Caribbean' is still relevant for the dependent territories of the Caribbean. Not so for the independent states, however, because *"you can not expect a child to creep back into his mother's womb"* as Suriname's former Prime Minister Henck Arron once said. Nevertheless in the early 1990s some politicians in Suriname considered reintegration in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and made it an issue in one election campaign. Suriname and the Netherlands have endured a difficult relationship since independence and have been trapped too much in narrow bilateral relations and polemics.[2] I have tried to avoid this trap by opting for a more general and comparative discourse and use the situation in the Dutch Caribbean more as an application or illustration.

1. Independence and periodization

Independence has come to most countries in the world at different periods in history. Processes towards independence have varied and are often tied to specific time periods (waves). For instance in the Western Hemisphere we see that 16 countries of Southern and Central America gained independence between 1810 and 1825. A second wave occurred only 150 years later and was made up of 13 Caribbean countries that gained independence between 1962 and 1983. Only six other countries in the Americas got their independence outside these two waves, among which the early revolutionary birds USA (1776) and Haiti (1804) (see annex 1 for a complete overview). The pattern seems clearly connected with size (i.e. in general larger countries gained independence earlier than smaller countries) and colonizing power (i.e. in general colonies of Spain and Portugal gained independence earlier than those of France, England and the Netherlands, with the notable exception of the revolutions in the USA and Haiti that led to their early independence). This probably has to do with superpower status i.e. Spain and Portugal were early global powers, while the Netherlands, England and France were superpowers of a later period. Independence was obtained by former colonies when the imperial power was weakened i.e. when the mother country was clearly over the top of its power and had less resources and probably less interest to subdue its colonies further. The two World Wars clearly had weakened the European empires (notably England and France, but also the Netherlands) and it is not surprising that there was a wave of independence throughout Africa and Asia shortly after World War II.

It should be clear that defining costs and benefits of independence is a very tricky endeavor, especially for the older generations of independent States. Tilly did research on the making of European States over a thousand year period and basically came to the conclusion that *"war made states and states made war"*, thus indicating tremendous costs for most and benefits for just but a few. In addition within the states the coercive forces and elites were the dominant ones and extracted a surplus from the farmers and taxpayers to finance their wars, thus the internal costs for victorious states were also high [*Tilly, C., 1992*]. European rivalry and war making not only reshaped the map of Europe many times over, but also spilled over into the rest of the world. For instance Suriname began as an English colony, but ended up as Dutch property, while Guyana started out as Dutch and later became English.

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[2] Since the last elections in Suriname (May 2000) the relationship between the two countries has improved substantially and ministerial meetings have resumed after the latest deterioration, which lasted more than three years.

If we go back into the making of States in Europe it becomes an impossible task to sort out what the costs and benefits were of creating and maintaining independence. How do we assess the costs of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces *(Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Provincien)* that was finally recognized by the Peace of Munster in 1648, after an eighty years war against Spain? The benefits seemed great, because the Dutch became the first hegemonic power in the capitalist world economy, at least according to Wallerstein [*1980*], but this was less based on their political independence than on their trading skills. Even the making of the Dutch State with its numerous wars and infractions can not be measured in simple economic statistics, because it is for one impossible to give a value for the life of a *'Geus'* or any other freedom fighter or casualty. What were the costs and benefits of the making of the United Kingdom or of the process of gluing together the Italian or German State? Should these not have come into existence if people had known that Mussolini and Hitler would one day capture their State and sacrifice so many lives? I would say a cost-benefit analysis for the independence of European countries is an impossible task, because what are the benchmarks to measure the costs and benefits against?

Somehow it seems possible to undertake such a task for the Caribbean, because of its small size, recent independence and hopefully fewer variables to deal with. We may be wrong, however. To take just one historical issue: how can one discount for slavery and the loss of live resulting from Maroon wars? Or is this just not part of the equation, because this was prior to independence in the Caribbean? So what about the case of Haiti, which became independent in 1804 amidst a widespread system of slavery? Should they regret their independence, because things have not gone well in the end? What should we have told those slaves who fought for their freedom under Toussain L'Ouverture and later Dessalines in what was then called Saint-Domingue [*Trouillot, M., 1990*]? Should we have advised them to remain slaves until slavery was abolished in the region a few decades later? Would they have listened if we had told them about the eventual torture and destructive policies of papa Doc and many other dictators? I guess not, because the price of freedom is another variable that is simply impossible to value. Thus I just want to stress that the topic of this seminar is somewhat odd and we should realize that we deal with a daunting task if we take the subject serious?

From a perspective of direct loss of human lives it is clear that the independence wave that started in the Caribbean in 1962 did cost far less than the independence wars of the early 19th Century in Latin America. The same goes for Suriname in 1975. In Suriname, however, fear for potential ethnic violence led to a massive emigration in the early 1970s, which meant a huge cost for a new nation, because it lost lots of skills, brains and capital in a short time. The political leadership at the time clearly underestimated this loss (cost) to the independent state. Massive migration can not be linked exclusively to fear of independence, because in recent years the Netherlands Antilles, notably Curaçao, has seen an exodus of its citizens as well. Lack of trust in the future has been the main reason for their departure. Migration in itself, however, is by no means a new phenomenon in the Caribbean and it seems that the economy -but also politics- has found ways to work its way around it.[3]

2. Size and independence

What is fairly evident in the Caribbean, however, is that after two major independence waves that most of the remaining dependent territories are among the smallest countries and islands (in land mass and/or population). Size has always been a simple but fascinating explanatory variable in sociology and in most social sciences for that matter. In the concluding chapter of my dissertation on the phenomenon of the Colonial State I stated that

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[3] For those interested Brana-Shute -with assistance of R. Hoefte- (1983) has published a bibliography of Caribbean Migration and Caribbean Immigrant Communities.

> *"it is not hard to see that imperial penetration of smaller territories was easier than that of larger ones, which probably explains why the smaller colonial territories of the Caribbean either received their independence quite late or not at all."* [Schalkwijk, M., 1994a, p. 328].

In such micro-societies dominance of the local elites by the imperial agents was easier to attain and Colonial Administration probably replaced any form of Colonial State earlier than in larger colonies.

Small size had other effects as well, which can be illustrated best by the fact that in the smaller plantation colonies runaway slaves and guerilleros had little chance to regroup themselves into Maroon tribes as has been the case in larger colonies such as Suriname. In general there were not only less slaves in the smaller colonies and therefore less chance for a large scale uprising, but more important probably the would-be runaways also had less land to stage an effective guerrilla war and to avoid detection for long periods [e.g. *Price, R., 1973*]. There are other factors of course that have to do with size e.g. the cost of maintaining a full state apparatus is relatively higher in a small country than in larger ones, but also the fact that if you want to go beyond a mere existence level economy, you will need a minimum number of educated people to plan, monitor and implement the different aspects of development. The same goes for a local market, which benefits from a larger size.

Thus from a number of angles it is not surprising that only the smallest countries in the Caribbean have remained colonies and the question of size seems a legitimate question to discuss thresholds for indigenous development, and moreover political independence. From this perspective one may say that in general the costs of political independence for very small countries will be relatively higher than for larger countries. Historically, however, smallness has not prevented many cities to emerge and gain independence. Venice and Genoa for instance were highly successful in their time, but there are contemporary others such as Singapore, Monaco or Vatican City [e.g. *Burke, P., 1986*].

So what is the size limit? For the Caribbean it turned out that most islands that were larger than 500 square kilometers and had more than 100.000 inhabitants became independent. But again such a threshold did not work for Europe, where Liechtenstein, San Marino and a handful of others became independent despite their small size and small population.
For the Dutch Caribbean it seems that size may have been an explanatory variable due to the fact that Suriname, which was larger became independent, while the islands of the Dutch Antilles remained dependent, even though Aruba broke away from the pack of six islands with a 'status aparte'.

In the size debate much has been said already, but it seems that Edwin Jones' conclusion still holds its ground:

> *"... there is no simple correspondence between small state and the syndrome of administrative, economic and political underdevelopment. Small size is indeed a problem for societies that are unwilling to make the sacrifices which genuine change requires"* [1976, p. 95].

Size of course is also important with respect to economic development, and we will address it there as well.

3. The Colonial State

From a colonial perspective, however, the domination of imperial agents in most sectors of small societies has led to the elimination of a strong local elite, which could contest the State institutions and thus establish a virtual Colonial State. Absence of a Colonial State in turn decreased the chance to become independent i.e. to establish a Post-Colonial State.

At this point it is probably necessary to explain the concept of the Colonial State, since it is a vital concept when we discuss colonialism and post-colonialism. To me the Colonial State represents a set of institutions run by agents (bureaucratic, coercive, and political), which may dominate a colonial territory, but not consisting merely of an organizational and personnel extension of the imperial state. Local elites should have some say over these institutions or may have developed similar but competing institutions, while they struggle for power or share power with imperial agents. Colonial Administration then is made up of those parts of the Colonial State, which are fully or virtually controlled by imperial agents. In case the imperial agents have managed to dominate all state institutions extensively and for a prolonged period of time, the Colonial State in fact may cease to exist, and only Colonial Administration remains. This normally is the goal of colonizing powers.[4] When local elites, however, maintain some indigenous control over the state institutions the Colonial State remains alive, while conflicts between local and foreign elites will often continue [*Schalkwijk, M., 1994a, p. 6*). In a Colonial State the local elites thus gained experience in governing -however incomplete- and developed institutions on which an independent State could be build. I have demonstrated the presence of strong Colonial States in several Caribbean Colonies.

Given their larger size and population it is somewhat strange that the French colonies -notably French Guyane, Guadeloupe and Martinique- did not become independent. The fact that they have not, I have tried to explain elsewhere as follows:

> *"One reason why the French Caribbean has not managed to develop into independent states apparently is that their incorporation into the French empire was too complete i.e. it left little of the original Colonial State to work with, which could serve as a basis for a Post-colonial State. Thus the erstwhile Colonial State of the 17th Century had become 'pure' Colonial Administration in the 20th Century in the French Caribbean. Local participation in Colonial Government was reduced within the boundaries determined by imperial agents and therefore limited"*
> [Schalkwijk, M., 1994a, p. 328].

What this implies is that the French imperial style or colonial rule was much more rigorous than that of England or the Netherlands and did not leave much room for local elites to develop potential political institutions of their own. It is interesting to note that in the Americas Haiti, a French territory gained independence at a fairly early stage i.e. when the imperial agents probably did not had enough time to eradicate the institutions of the Colonial State.[5] On the other hand these colonies where substantially larger than the remaining French territories.

In the case of French Guyane the Kourou space base and the enormous investments that have accompanied it, have added clear strategic and economic interests from not only France,

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[4] In colonies with large territories, a vast population or many tribes, the cost of total colonization was simply too high for the imperial powers. In such cases -e.g. many countires in Africa and Asia- we see that the empires often used the divide and rule principle or were satisfied by loyalty from tribal chiefs (and thus left the internal reign to the chiefs rather than spending their resources on submission).

[5] The large French speaking states in the USA and Canada also gained independence quite early, but they were sold or conquered, so that their case seems less clear.

but the European Union as well. It is therefore unlikely that French Guyane will ever become independent even if its citizens would prefer that. It seems that by using distinct demographic policies France is making sure that the indigenous population is being altered substantially, so that any potential pro-independence majority (of mainly local Creoles) is becoming highly unlikely. France will simply not allow another Algerian type disaster that forced them to remove the space base from Algeria to French Guyane. Thus it seems that the imperial policy with respect to French Guyane is: prevent independence at all costs.

In the Dutch Caribbean Suriname had a stronger Colonial State than the six islands that made up the Netherlands Antilles. Curaçao's much smaller size, but also the fact that in the times of slavery it served as a naval base, slave depot, and a trading center, rather than a regular plantation colony, had to do with this difference. In several respects colonial Curaçao -with its naval activity and merchants- was more a replica of Dutch society than Suriname ever was.

4. State-making

Processes of State-making bear on the discussion of costs and benefits of independence, which thus will have to be taken into account as well. This should be evident since political independence is closely associated with the process of state-making. In fact the main connotation we have with the word 'Independence' is a political one i.e. it has to do primarily with the Sovereignty of the people, which is very much linked to the concept of the State. Thus the State seems one of the primary concepts to focus on, when discussing 'independence'.

It should be clear that independence definitely promotes the development of the State and of politics. Most countries got their first Constitution on the eve of independence and the introduction of the Constitution in turn has often led to modernization of the legal framework. Thus it seems that in a Durkheimian sense independence can be seen as a very important 'social fact' with clear -and I would say overall positive- effects for the legal codes of the State. And the same is true for the political system, since that system is also most often scrutinized at the eve of independence.

The process of state-making and the adjustment of the political system, however, normally takes time, which often was lacking during many of the transitions from colony to independent state. As we described earlier, independence in the Third World often happened in waves and during such a wave many countries were caught in the process and had to speed up the transition. Those that fought a war of independence often had no time and room to build a well-defined state, but had to do that after independence. Other colonies that were riding the wave of independence that followed such wars, often had little time to design a state model and test its functionality either. Some authors therefore describe the process as one in which "a modern rational state was imposed from above" i.e. most often by the Colonial powers [*Smith, A.D., 1989, p. 242*). This meant that in nations where this was the case, State-making and political development sometimes took a tough ride through post-colonial history.

Just a few countries probably had the luxury of a gradual transition from colony to more internal autonomy and from there to independence. Most Caribbean independent states were among this privileged category and it seems that this has led to more stable post-colonial governments than in any other region. According to Carl Stone

> *"the influence of non-Hispanic capitalist core states has been projected as creating strong and relatively stable state systems", while "the feudal-Hispanic legacy of state power in the Caribbean Basin has been portrayed as generating weak authoritarian state systems" [1986, p. 34].*

He added that the period of self-government along Westminster democratic lines, promoted democratic-pluralist regimes that have characterized the post-Colonial CARICOM countries. Selwyn Ryan's assessment of democracy in the Anglophone Caribbean is critical but positive. Except for a few cases *"there have not been any fundamental regime shift since the island states of the region became independent"* [1999, p. xv].

To him the record clearly is much better than that of Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Asia. He also adds that the Westminster model has worked better than the Dutch consociational system that was copied in Suriname, but which -due to its immobilism- led to two military coups.

State-making is a long process [*Tilly, C., 1992*] and it is not fair to judge young states harshly, for they will probably need some time to find a stable political system. For the Netherlands it was a long political road from the Republic of the Seven United Provinces in 1648, to the Dutch Unity State of 1814 and its further democratic expansion until a full-blown democracy in 1919 [*Daalder, H., 1995*]. The Caribbean so far have not done a bad job. In the Dutch Caribbean Suriname experimented with a parliamentary democracy during the period of internal autonomy (1949-1975). Soon after independence non-commissioned officers staged a military coup (February 1980) that was widely supported at the time, but they lost popular support quickly after the execution of 15 civic leaders in December 1982. The isolation of the military eventually forced them to grant elections (November 1987), but they seized power once more in December 1990. Under local and international pressure they had to release their grip on the State quickly and called early elections in May 1991. Both times the party that had been established by the former military leadership (NDP) lost the post-coup elections overwhelmingly. In the process the Constitution of 1975 was replaced in 1987 by a new one, thereby switching from the old parliamentary system towards a mixed system with a stronger executive president. This system has not been working as intended either and the flaws were shown clearly in 1999 when a majority of the National Assembly failed to remove the President from office. Suriname's political development thus had its ups and downs, but it has rejoined the democratic world.

5. Nation-building

The National State is a fairly recent state-form, but clearly the dominant one since the 19th century, as Tilly [*1992*] has demonstrated. The State these days cannot be separated from that of Nation, since the main idea is that a State should represent and govern a Nation of people. It is for this reason that often in the literature the concept of Nation-State is being employed [e.g. *Hutchinson, J. & Smith, A.D., 1994; Hobsbawm, E.J., 1992; Gellner, E., 1983*].[6] The breaking up of States in Eastern Europe underlines this notion by readjusting borders to fit better with distinct ethnic groups, sometimes also referred to as 'nations'. In one sense it is a process to recreate more homogeneous societies, but at the same time it shows the volatility of countries where several ethnic groups were brought together under one ideological state umbrella. The same volatility often exists in former colonies where different ethnic groups were forced on each other to produce staple goods. The breaking up of so many larger states may seem odd these days, but it illustrates the point that formal independence can be a fiction if the State is not connected to any recognizable Nation. This again is one more variable to look at when we explore the costs and benefits of independence in the Caribbean.

The current trend in Eastern Europe of State-breaking rather than State-making indicates that independence seems less costly in societies that are culturally more homogeneous than in more plural societies. In fragmented plural societies independence may sometimes lead to

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[6] "The term national state, regrettably, does not necessarily mean nation-sate, a state whose people share a strong linguistic, religious, and symbolic identity" [Tilly, C., 1992, p. 2-3].

conflicts, civil wars or secessionist movements [e.g. *Goor, L. van de et al, 1996*]. But then again failure by a Colonial power to grant independence to a nation that demands it, may also come at a substantial cost e.g. when this results in a prolonged guerrilla war. Ayoob includes both cases in the following assessment:

> *"There is abundant data, therefore, to support the conclusion that the overwhelming majority of conflicts in the international system since 1945 have been 'an ubiquitous corollary of the birth, formation, and fracturing of 'Third World' states" [Ayoob, 1996, p. 68].*

Overall the independence wave that started in 1962 in the Caribbean was a relatively quiet one. No independence wars, no civil wars and no violent secessionist movements afterwards. This does not mean, however, that all was well. In the most plural societies i.e. Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Suriname it was clear that the idea of independence was not embraced by all ethnic groups. Many East Indians feared ethnic violence and permanent domination by the Afro-Creoles, who led the independence movement in all three countries.[7] The Colonial power was seen as the one that at least gave protection against the other ethnic group. With respect to Suriname the political leadership at the time, both in the Netherlands and in Suriname, underestimated that problem tremendously, but luckily it did not erupt into a civil war. The costs were enormous, however, because ethnic fear was fanned by the opposition leaders, which led many civilians to flee the country and thus caused a tremendous drain in human resources. Does this automatically means that independence should be avoided for plural societies? No, but it does mean that the process towards independence should be a cautious one during which consensus between the major groups should be promoted.

Nation-building is a long and difficult process and those that tried shortcuts have often learned a hard lesson; Yugoslavia being a recent example of failure, despite Marshall Joseph Tito's rigorous attempts to glue different peoples together under one socialist ideology. In the end the unity evaporated quickly after his death. Thus it is widely acknowledged that nation-building takes time, as W. Connor concludes:

> *There is ample evidence that Europe's currently recognized nations emerged only very recently, in many cases centuries later than dates customarily assigned for their emergence" [1994, p. 159].*

Actually it is only logical that nation-building most often follows state-making or in the words of colonel Joseph Pilsudski, the liberator of Poland

> *"The state creates the nation and not the other way round" [Hobsbawn, E.J., 1994, p.62).[8]*

Recent examples such as East Timor have proved that it can be the other way round as well, but Pilsudski's observation seems to be the rule, rather than the exception.

The process of nation-building has also been put on par with national identity. Benedict Anderson [*1983*] called it an 'imagined community' and illustrated among others how the distance between people born in a colony and those born in the motherland developed into

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[7] In Guyana, the leader of the opposition, Dr. Cheddy Jagan, a committed Marxist, was pro-independence, but it is not clear if his followers shared this view. The UK and USA had cooperated with Jagan's once friend and political ally, Forbes Burnham, to oust Jagan (Jagan 1972). According to Ryan the election before independence in Trinidad "was a bitterly fought election, one in which Trinidad and Tobago almost became consumed by ethnically driven civil war" [1996, p. 21].

[8] "In the Dutch case much points to the hypothesis: first the state, than the nation" [Scheffer, P., 1996, p. 24].

different types i.e. a new national identity was formed. The literature on nationalism has made it clear that most often the process towards formation of a nation-state began at the cultural level i.e. with a search for identity.[9] Oostindië acknowledges that the formation of an identity, especially a 'Dutch Caribbean' identity may take a long time and is not so sure that it will happen, because he is focusing on the differences rather than the commonalties of the people. I am probably more optimistic, because I think that when people live together long enough, they eventually will come to see not only their differences, but also their common ground. The school system, the work place, the neighborhood, the shared language, literature, newspapers, a common history, intermarriage, shared national moments, will all assist in developing a sense of common identity.

In the plural societies of the Southern Caribbean such as Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname it is clear that the state also came before the nation. The process of nation-building, however, was usually intensified after independence as the political leadership saw this as one of its first objectives. With respect to Suriname it should be pointed out that the military coup in 1980 marked a shift towards a more intensive period of nation-building, as it was welcomed by a majority of the population at the time. In an interview Bram Peper, one of the leading Dutch socialists, stated:

> *"What happened there is a necessary condition to*
> *finally make policy on the basis of national goals"*
> *[Galen, J.J. van, 2001, p. 112].*

He and many other Dutch politicians were frustrated with developments in Suriname - especially with respect to the slow implementation of development projects, increase in immigration and stagnant politics and economics- and as a consequence the bilateral relationship had eroded. The Dutch socialist led government, however, condemned the coup, but later gave the new left leaning Surinamese government the benefit of the doubt and even started to steer it -with the help of its massive development aid- away from the military. During this period expectations of the population in Suriname were high, which led to increased mobilization of the people. Unfortunately the period was cut short by a number of countercoups. When the military leaders executed 15 leaders of the civil opposition in December 1982, they suddenly found themselves isolated from the population.[10] The coup that had been dubbed a 'revolution' eventually turned into an ordinary dictatorship. It was no surprise therefore that the election of 1987 was a disaster for the military when 87% of the population voted for the 'old' political parties that had been ousted in 1980.

Thus the process of nation-building may take some strange turns, but all these defining moments add to the concept of becoming a nation. Such moments are not defined by different ethnic backgrounds or religion, but by a common social and historical experience. When Anthony Nesty was the first black swimmer and first Surinamese in 1988 to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games in South Korea the joy and pride was not limited to one group. When one year later a Suriname Airways airplane crashed and killed 178 people the grief was not limited either. And when president Wijdenbosch refused to step down in 1996 the ethnic diversity of the masses that rallied before his office spoke for itself. Suriname probably still has

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[9] For Suriname's cultural search and its link to nationality see Meel (1998).

[10] In *'Geschiedenis van Suriname, van stam tot staat'* (Walburg Pers, Zutphen, 1993) the historians E. Bakker, L. Dalhuisen, M. Hassankhan & F. Steegh wrote about the period immediately after the coup: "Many, if not most, Surinamese were sympathetic towards the military. People did not regret the fact that the 'old' politicians were sidelined or that lazy civil servants were 'beaten up' in the military baracks " (p.146, translation by author). They describe the year 1982 as follows: "In the meantime the wide support that Bouterse had was withering away, when it became clear that Bouterse was not going to travel the road that led back to democratic relations" (p. 149).

a long road to go, but in the past 30 years -and despite all political errors and migration- it has proven to be at least a nation-in-the-making.[11]

The Encyclopedia of the Netherlands Antilles is quite blunt when it states

> *"One can not speak of an Antillian people or an Antillian Nation"* [1985, p. 185].

Thus it was no surprise when Aruba opted out of the Netherlands Antilles, while a recent poll at St. Maarten showed that 69% of the population there is in favor of a similar status aparte. Thus the individual Dutch islands seem to have at least more internal coherence than cross-island solidarity.

It is no use to try to disguise ethnic and religious differences in a society and assume that there automatically is a nation once independence is proclaimed. This is foolish and will not help the situation. On the other hand utter despair with the task at hand will not help either. Therefore States that have become independent must find ways to foster relations between its citizens. A long-term view to do it is needed, however. Paul Scheffer testifies to this when he wrote:

> *"In a more general sense nation-building is a prolonged process. The Netherlands became a coherent nation only in the course of the nineteenth century, and only after the French occupation. The expectation that Suriname would have rivaled such a prolonged process after twenty years, under essentially more difficult circumstances, is not realistic"* [1996, p. 83].[12]

Nation-building involves some tremendous costs and some states that are not willing to pay the cost will probably in the end pay the price for not doing so. Those that take care may harvest the benefits of a united people that can trigger the nation-state into accelerated development.

6. Independence and Development

Independence of States in recent periods such as in the Caribbean -and maybe during most of history- has also been linked to the notion of Development. Cheddy Jagan, the former Prime Minister and president of Guyana, wrote: *"To us national liberation implies political independence, economic emancipation and social justice"* [1972, p. 362].
Development has most often been interpreted as economic emancipation and for the time being I will concentrate on this aspect. Political independence should be a tool towards a higher goal and not a goal in itself. Many politicians, however, have given up on those higher goals and have made independence itself a goal. Of course national pride and dignity can be

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[11] In 1997 of some 240 citizens that were asked a question whether they were proud to be Surinamese, only 2% were quite negative, 14% somewhat negative, while 84% answered positively. In reply to another question about independence only 6% agreed with those that had left the country (Press release 3-12-1997 of the Sibibusi Movement for Restoration and Unity.) The second question was framed as follows "which of the following sentences best describes wat happened since independence?": We have become more conscious as a people (28%, positive indicator); We have learned to adapt to the circumstances (66%, neutral indicator), Those that left at the time were right (6%, negative indicator).

[12] Translation by author, the original Dutch version reads: *"Meer in algemene zin geldt dat natievorming een langdurig proces is. Nederland werd pas in de loop van de negentiende eeuw een samenhangende natie, mede door de Franse tijd. De verwachting dat Suriname na twintig jaar zo'n langdurig proces zou hebben kunnen geëvenaard onder wezenlijk moeilijker omstandigheden is onwaarachtig."*

derived from independence, which serves an important function, but at the same time this is not enough anymore. Douglass North once said:

> *"The existence of a state is essential for economic growth; the state, however, is the source of man-made economic decline"* [1981, p.20].

Politicians and their entourage have a tendency to prey on the state, while bureaucracies can grow beyond any functionality. Furthermore political instability can undermine local and international trust and keep donor agencies and private investors away.

Suriname has learned this lesson the hard way. The country experienced seven relatively fat years following independence, but decline set in when the Dutch suspended aid in December 1982 after severe human right violations by the military. Suriname's economy at the time was build around mineral exports and trust in Dutch development aid, while both government and private investments followed the aid trend closely [*Schalkwijk, M., 1994b, p. 187-189*]. Capital flight and high inflation followed the suspension of Dutch aid, while its restoration in 1988 brought back some confidence, dropped inflation levels, but did not repatriate the lost capital. The economy had its ups and downs since and is currently back on a slow growth path. In addition to bauxite, oil and gold have become major income earners, although for gold this is primarily in the informal economy.

In the dependent parts of the Dutch Kingdom it turned out that Curaçao's economy is doing poorly and needs huge Dutch subsidies, while Aruba is in a good economical shape. The foreign debt of the Netherlands Antilles, however, is much larger than that of Suriname.

Overall the Caribbean economies have shown different capacities and growth paths, since independence [*Lalta, S. & Freckleton, M., 1993; Mandle, J., 1989*). In no way, however, have the Caribbean economies shown any consistent breakdowns or performance that was worse than other developing regions. Trinidad & Tobago did quite well in the seventies with the oil boom, and even though initially it failed to spend it wisely, it was able to broaden its base and is currently doing well in the region. So are Barbados and the Bahamas, while Jamaica and Suriname at several periods suffered from a decline in alumina prices. Guyana had a hard time to overcome the legacy of the meager Burnham years, but has made an economic comeback in several areas, although old foreign debts are burdening the economy.

The dependent territories have not performed bad either, although there also were clear distinctions. When the oil industry was closed down in both Curaçao and Aruba, this triggered Aruba to develop tourism successfully very quickly as an alternative, while Curaçao seemed too paralyzed to act and waited upon the Dutch Government. Eventually the oil industry came back, but this did not rejuvenate the Curaçao economy, while it did so in Aruba.

If we add other indicators such as education and health to the development picture, the results are in fact relatively good. The Human Development Index (HDI) of the UNDP listed 174 countries in its 1999 report. Two thirds of the 16 Caribbean countries that were included were in the middle range of the list, while only Haiti was among those that ranked higher than 100. On the other end 4 countries were among the 50 countries with fairly high scores.[13] Thus the Caribbean's development is not that bad at all. This again also goes for the dependent territories, although their HDI score was not listed.

With respect to economic development the usual complaint about the Caribbean is their small size. This according to the economic text books means a small home market, less differentiation and specialization, fewer banks and firms, great openness of the economy, etc. In short: a fragile economy. The remarkable reality is that the small states of the Caribbean

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[13] The actual ranks were: Barbados (29), Bahamas (31), Antigua & Barbuda (38), Trinidad & Tobago (46), St. Kitts & Nevis (51), Grenada (52), Dominica (53), Cuba (58), Suriname (64), St. Vincent & the Grenadines (75), St. Lucia (81), Jamaica (82), Belize (83), Dominican Republic (88), Guyana (99), Haiti (152).

have done much better than many larger countries in Asia and Africa according to the HDI ranks. Thus they have proven in fact to be much more viable than many had thought. This probably is so because those that did well have succeeded to develop a small niche in the world market, just like the small states of Europe have done in Europe.

Actually it has turned out that small size was not a problem in the colonial days, when King Sugar reigned and found his way to the market. Neither was size a problem when bauxite was mined or for oil and gold to be sold, or to fit tourists on the beaches and in the hotels. We should therefore probably reconsider the notion of small size, since it may be more academic than real, and I therefore agree with the following statement:

> *"Finally, one also needs to say no to the fatalism which treats the small size of Caribbean countries as an obstacle to development, making the countries of the region helpless victims of international events and deserving, perhaps requiring special favors and preferences ad infinitum in the international process..... Small size, fragile economies is not an inevitable combination -this is perhaps the clearest assertion by this collection of essays as it seeks to contribute to the quest for a Caribbean development paradigm" [Lalta, S. & Freckleton, M., 1993, p. 7].*

7. International relations

At most periods in history small size has meant living in constant fear of larger neighbor states with expansive ambitions, but times have changed and there seem to be less political predators that prey on small states these days. Of course the regional and international organizations such as CARICOM, ACS, OAS, and UN provide a measure of protection that was not there in the older days. These organizations are therefore of primary political importance to the Caribbean Nation States.

The Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) was also established to provide a larger internal market and thus overcome the size problem. In another sense participation in CARICOM means a learning process i.e. to deal with international competition. CARICOM and other regional trade organizations will eventually -2005 is the current deadline- be replaced by the Free Trade Association of the Americas (FTAA). It is interesting to note that the FTAA is already used in a political sense to discriminate between states. During the last summit of the Americas (Quebec, April 2001), it was decided that non-democratic states will not be able to join the FTAA. Thus a political norm was institutionalized, which to most countries at the moment is not hard to achieve, because virtually all of the American independent States, with the notable exception of Cuba -and to a certain extent Haiti- are formal democracies.

The FTAA will eventually implement the Truman doctrine 'America for the Americans' to its fullest meaning. It will also affect the relationship between the Caribbean and Europe, which, however, has already been eroded by the Cotonou Agreement. Does this mean the end of European-Caribbean relationships? I guess not, unless the dependent territories will opt for or -under pressure from the USA- be forced towards independence. If the FTAA works it probably will mean a shift from trade and political relations towards cultural and other relations. One can also imagine that the cost of living may increase for dependent territories if the FTAA really works.

Mention should be made of the specialized regional organizations such as PAHO, IICA, which have been particularly useful in developing standards, preparing legislation, and contributing to a number of technical procedures that were beyond the limits of the individual state.

Thus even though the old foes of strong neighbors and regional powers play the game differently, small states should be alert for other predators, however, such as the Mafia in its various disguises. And then of course the international globalization process may render the whole concept of stateness and independence obsolete.

8. Conclusion

Part of this paper tried to explain why some Caribbean countries became independent, while others did not i.e. because of variables such as size, periodization, and the strenght of the Colonial State.

In the other part I explored a number of variables that are important in assessing the costs and benefits of independence such as: the loss of life, price of freedom, loss of strategic and economic interests, migration, development of political system (state-making, democracy), developing an identity (nation-building), economic development, general development (HDI), and protection (international relations).

Here, however, the exercise is somewhat blurred by the fact that from a methodological standpoint comparisons need more specification. At this point it may suffice to state that the following relevant comparisons can be made:
- between states that gained independence quite late and the early birds
- between Caribbean independent States and non-Caribbean Third World States
- between Caribbean independent States and former mother countries
- between independent and dependent Caribbean States
- between current dependent territory and mother country

It should be clear that in each comparison costs and benefits will mean something else e.g. the loss of life (cost) was much higher in the old colonies that became independent than for the Caribbean countries. Cost and benefits also have a different meaning depending on whose point of view one takes e.g. a higher standard of living (benefit) in a dependent territory may mean heavy subsidies (i.e. a loss) to the mother country. Migration can be a benefit to both the independent country if there is a high level of unemployment, and a benefit to the mother country if there is a large demand for labor. On the other hand it may be a loss to both if it is the other way round.

One may add other variables, however, such as the presence of certain norms and values (morals) e.g. euthanasia, same sex marriages, respect for God. Or the availability of a good environment, fresh water, etc. Addition of each variable may swing costs and benefits around. The endeavour is therefore not a simple straightforward one.

Let me conclude by stating that the Caribbean consists by and large of fairly small states and dependent territories, whose impact in todays world events is very limited, much more limited than in the days of King Sugar. Only Cuba had a world wide impact, at least during the cold war when Che Guevarra and Castro were admired by many would-be revolutionaries. Jamaica has some impact through its Reggae music and some other countries through sport or other celebrities. Overall these are marginal countries, who do not have the ambitions to lead the world by any means. These countries try to survive economically and have succeeded so far. Through regional and international cooperation they try to maintain their security and economic viability. Again they have succeeded relatively well. Can they do better? Yes! Can they be worse off? Also yes! Haiti has become a basket case that for many Caribbean societies represents a worse case scenario. Most states and independent territories are much better off and try to keep it that way. The independent states have to try to improve their capacities to deliver goods and services to its people. The dependent territories still have a choice to exert their right of self-determination, but also have the choice not to do so. Their choice is a free one and not a forced one, which is important. It means that they should find ways for their population to be respected at all time. It also means for the mother countries that they should

find ways to give respect -and not only welfare- to these people. This relationship in itself may be very tricky and probably impossible to solve. Thus in the end the cost of dependence may well be higher than the cost of independence.

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YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICAN STATES

Year	State	Region	Colonial Power
1776	United States	North America	Britain
1804	Haiti	Caribbean	France
1810	Chili	South America	Spain
1810	Columbia	South America	Spain
1810	Mexico	Central America	Spain
1811	Paraguay	South America	Spain
1811	Venezuela	South America	Spain
1816	Argentina	South America	Spain
1821	Costa Rica	Central America	Spain
1821	El Salvador	Central America	Spain
1821	Guatemala	Central America	Spain
1821	Honduras	Central America	Spain
1821	Nicaragua	Central America	Spain
1821	Peru	South America	Spain
1822	Brazil	South America	Portugal
1822	Ecuador	South America	Spain
1825	Bolivia	South America	Spain
1825	Uruguay	South America	Spain
1844	Dominican Republic	Caribbean	Spain, Haiti, USA
1867	Canada	North America	Britain, France
1902	Cuba	Caribbean	Spain, USA
1903	Panama	Central America	Spain, USA
1962	Jamaica	Caribbean	Britain
1962	Trinidad & Tobago	Caribbean	Britain
1966	Barbados	Caribbean	Britain
1966	Guyana	Caribbean	Britain
1973	Bahamas	Caribbean	Britain
1974	Grenada	Caribbean	Britain
1975	Suriname	Caribbean	Netherlands
1978	Dominica	Caribbean	Britain
1979	St. Lucia	Caribbean	Britain
1979	St. Vincent & Grenadines	Caribbean	Britain
1981	Antigua & Barbuda	Caribbean	Britain
1981	Belize	Caribbean	Britain
1983	St. Kitts, Nevis & Anguilla	Caribbean	Britain