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Leiden

The Netherlands

## **Life in "Paradise" a social psychological and anthropological study of nature conservation in the Caribbean Netherlands**

Mac Donald, S.

### **Citation**

Mac Donald, S. (2022, May 17). *Life in "Paradise": a social psychological and anthropological study of nature conservation in the Caribbean Netherlands*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3304059>

Version: Publisher's Version

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# STELLINGEN

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## **“Life in Paradise”: A social psychological and anthropological study of nature conservation in the Caribbean Netherlands.**

door Stacey Mac Donald

1. Small scale-ness has both positive and negative implications for nature conservation. The small scale can lead to a strong sense of responsibility for protecting the local environment (“If I don’t do something, nobody will”), but can evoke anxiety, as well, because of the complexity of the issues, and sheer amount of work that needs to be done to solve them. (This thesis, Chapter 3)
2. In addition to ‘universal’ socio-psychological drivers to protect the environment, the motives and behavior of conservation actors in the Caribbean Netherlands are also affected by the islands’ socio-political and geographical context, in particular the deep impact of the constitutional change in 2010 on the status of municipalities and the resentment about perceived ‘recolonization’. (This thesis, Chapter 3)
3. Not wanting or being able to leave their island heightens Bonaire’s fishers’ need to belong. This heightened need decreases their willingness to engage in conservation efforts they perceive as unjust, restrictive, and limiting. Participating in such effort could lead to exclusion and rejection by their community, thus diminishing their sense of belonging. (This thesis, Chapter 6)
4. Organizing fishers greatly aids formal institutions in structurally involving them in management efforts. However, simply having a fishery cooperative is far from sufficient to ensure their equal and effective inclusion in efforts towards environmental preservation. (This thesis, Chapter 7)
5. Whether participating in conservation work contributes to a sense of belonging within a community depends on the type of activities one participates in and how one does it. Activities that take cultural norms and values into account are more accepted and can contribute to a sense of belonging.
6. Participatory action research is an effective method to gain access and trust among groups who tend to be suspicious towards outsiders.
7. The dynamics of nature management and conservation in the Caribbean can only be understood in the context of local culture, and its colonial and post-colonial history.
8. Lack of trust among and within governmental entities and departments on the islands and in the European Netherlands, NGOs, and citizens, is the greatest inhibitor for the realization of nature conservation goals on the Caribbean Netherlands.
9. Truly comprehending contemporary nature and heritage conservation and management efforts, requires an interdisciplinary approach.
10. ‘You cannot solve another man’s problems if you are living in poverty yourself’. (Ramon de Leon, former marine park manager Bonaire, 2017). Nature conservation should go hand in hand with poverty alleviation.
11. Making things simple is extremely complicated.
12. A lot of people seem to be prepared to do whatever it takes to protect nature, but for many this willingness disappears once their actions start to threaten their reputation.