

RADBOUD UNIVERSITY

NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS



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A new government, a wind of change. If anything has become clear during the discussion of this first major legislative proposal, it is that the wind has been changed to a, in our opinion, highly unfavorable direction. Moreover, it will take on the size of a hurricane, one which will leave a trace of destruction and will mainly affect those already in deep water.¹

Handelingen tweede kamer 1994-1995, 03 november 1994²

¹ Original text in Dutch: Een nieuwe regering, een nieuwe wind. Als er iets bij de behandeling van dit eerste grote wetsvoorstel duidelijk is geworden, dan is het wel dat de wind draait vanuit een naar ons idee totaal verkeerde richting. Bovendien zal hij de omvang van een orkaan aannemen, een orkaan die zeker zijn sporen zal nalaten en vooral die mensen zal treffen die het water nu reeds tot aan de lippen staat.

² retrieved from <https://www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl/>

ABSTRACT

In this study, I debate the practice of sovereignty within the postcolonial Kingdom of the Netherlands, looking at waste governance during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017 on St. Maarten and Saba. St. Maarten is an autonomous country within the Kingdom, Saba a special municipality of the Netherlands and both are located in the hurricane belt of the Caribbean. Through examining how this difference in constitutional arrangement and the insular characteristics influences the taken responsibility in the management of waste before and after the hurricane season of 2017, I argue that the practice of sovereignty is depending on mainly the financial resources available on the island. However, there is more at play than the lack of available resources which cannot be seen apart from political and power struggles between the Dutch government seated in The Hague and the island governments. Due to compliance with good governance and financial accountability, Saba is negotiating more autonomy for itself during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017. St. Maarten, although being autonomous, is more restrained by the Dutch government during the aftermath of 2017 because of a suspicious relation between the two governments involved. In taking responsibility an epistemic shift is needed where all the governments involved need to push for a sustainable long-term vision to implement a proper waste management for these Caribbean islands that are most vulnerable to impacts of the changing climate.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBB: Build Back Better

BES: Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba

BZK: Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

CDR: Common but Differentiated Responsibilities

DCNA: Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance

EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone

EPIC: Environmental Protection in the Caribbean

KTILV: The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

KNMI: The Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute

I&M: Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment

I&W: Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NRRP: St. Maarten National Recovery and Resilience Plan

OCT: Overseas Countries or Territories

RCN: Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland

SABARC: Saba Archaeological Center

SCF: Saba Conservation Foundation

SIDS: Small Island Developing States

SIMARC: St. Maarten Archaeological Center

SPAW: The Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife

SS&S: Statia Safe & Sound

STENAPA: St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation

UN: United Nations

VROM BES: Wet volkshuisvesting, ruimtelijke ordening en milieubeheer BES

VROMI: Ministry of Public Health, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure

WB: World Bank

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean islands are represented by green, lush islands where tourists can enjoy their careless holidays. When 'google-ing' the Dutch Caribbean islands, Google almost became a TripAdvisor showing white beaches, green environment, unspoiled blue water; in other words, a clean area. See also images 1 and 3. The islands also have another environmental reality, namely hazards. In September 2017, hurricanes Irma and Maria slammed Caribbean Islands. Afterwards, the island of St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius were represented by devastated buildings, infrastructure and environment; in other words, chaos and dirt, see images 2 and 4. In this study, the practice of sovereignty and responsibility as a result of this change of the representation of the environment of these islands that belong to the Kingdom of the Netherlands is explored.



Figure 1. The representation of St. Maarten on Google Images. Source: Google Images.



Figure 2. The representation of St. Maarten on Google Images after hurricane 8
Irma. Source: Google Images.



Figure 3. The representation of Saba on Google Images. Source: Google Images.



Figure 2. The representation of Saba on Google Images after hurricane Irma. Source: Google Images.

The aftermath of the devastating hurricane season of 2017 in the Caribbean revealed some unpleasant discussions. While the international community has rushed to assist, the question remains: Who will clean up the Caribbean and who will pay the bill?³ These hurricanes put pressure on postcolonial ties between former motherland and former colonies in a painful manner, resulting in heated discussions about sovereignty and responsibility. Is it the population themselves, the local administrations or the central institutions in the metropole that are responsible to take care of the situation after the hurricanes? Do these islands and their population have a legal claim to get assistance from their former motherland? Is it reasonable to expect these small islands to deal with these enormous (global) problems all by themselves? These questions are all difficult to address, and the recent catastrophic hurricanes have shown that many of them remain unanswered. One would expect the non-sovereign territories to be better off, with rich metropole countries providing extensive financial and logistical aid. But even here the picture is mixed: while it seems that the French and Dutch governments do take some responsibilities, the American administration has done little to support Puerto Rico. The transformation of former colonies into (semi-) autonomous countries offers a unique angle to examine these effects of relationships between former colonizers and colonized in times of such hazards.

During the hurricane season of 2017, I started my Masters at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. Aside from the standard curriculum I enrolled in another course, namely Postcolonial Europe. This course inspired me to critically reflect on the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has a unique political structure of different countries that belong under one Kingdom. The Kingdom is the ultimate sovereign state and a transatlantic constitutional monarchy which consists of a territory located in Western Europe and six small islands in the Caribbean Sea. The reason that the Kingdom is transatlantic dates back to colonial history when some of the Caribbean islands were colonized by the Netherlands in the 1630s. The Caribbean islands that belong to the Kingdom of the Netherlands came to my

³ See for example: <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/waarom-de-autonome-status-van-sint-maarten-de-noodhulp-vanuit-nederland-bemoeilijkt~b93bd162/>
<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/01/03/de-gespleten-wederopbouw-op-een-eiland-a1586946>
<https://daily.jstor.org/hurricanes-cleans-caribbean/>
<https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/wie-betaalt-de-wederopbouw-van-sint-maarten~b9fed387/>

attention in the early phase of this study because they embody different degrees of sovereignty despite being all located within one single Kingdom. All islands remain locked in the postcolonial sphere as a result of rejection of full sovereignty, where sovereignty varies across the former colonial islands and are not always synchronous – a factor that is central to this study.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Although hurricanes are a natural phenomenon, the frequency and strength of these hazards are increasing because of the changing climate. Located at the geographical and political margins of the Kingdom, these Dutch Caribbean islands are central to the Dutch experiences of the changing climate. A lot of devastation happened during the hurricane season of 2017 on these three islands. Due to this devastating effect, a lot of (additional) waste was created. This leaves its traces on the environment. Within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the environment is an autonomous affair, which means that island governments are responsible for solving the waste problems and not the central institutions in the Netherlands. However, since the variation of sovereignty between the different islands, the role of the Dutch government varies for the three Leeward Islands that were hit by hurricane Irma and Maria. The question is how sovereignty influences the practice of responsibility during these times of hazards within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, researching two of the three islands that were hit by hurricane Irma and Maria. Therefore, my research question is:

How is the practice of sovereignty within the Kingdom of the Netherlands reflected in the differences between Saba (a special municipality of the Netherlands) and St. Maarten (an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands) when looking at the taken responsibility of waste governance during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017?

THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

A lot of research has taken place on the Caribbean islands which exists of all sorts and sizes. Created by European colonialism, migrants' societies, heterogeneous linguistic, religious, ethnic and political legacies, scholarship so far has mainly focused on aspects of governance (Hall, Benn 2005, Clegg, Pantojas García 2009),

sovereignty (Veenendaal, Oostindie 2017, Mulder 2018), culture (Dunkley 2011, Hall, Benn 2005, Boufoy-Bastick, Chinien 2015) and identity (Hillman 2009).

In the literature, the Dutch Caribbean islands are often labelled as ‘small island developing states’ (SIDS) due to their intrinsic characteristics: small territories and populations with restricted economies that are highly dependent on limited natural resources and imports of goods (de Agueda Corneloup, Mol 2014a). There are scholars who acknowledge the fragile position of these SIDS with regard to the changing climate and other environmental issues (see e.g. (Kelman, West 2009, Campbell, Niblett 2016). Although changes in the environment and the problems that come along with it are not a recently phenome, it seems that this topic is not well developed yet within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This is particularly striking considering the academic expertise on ecological issues in these territories by ecologists and biologists (see for example the different document of IMARES).⁴

With regard to the Dutch Caribbean islands, the decolonization process and its implications have been well-analyzed by different scholars (e.g. (Oostindie, Klinkers 2012, De Jong, Van der Veer 2012). Current debates mainly question the functioning of governance, the opinion of the Antilleans about the reinvigoration of the Dutch presence (framed as ‘recolonization’) and how identity is perceived on these islands (see for example the project Confronting Caribbean Challenges carried out by the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV)).⁵

This study tries to produce an understanding of making a linkage between the sovereign and political status of the Dutch Caribbean islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands relating to an environmental issue; and to facilitate a body of knowledge of these territories’ environmental issues that, not yet, are seldom engages with their non-sovereign status in the academic literature.

⁴ Research institute of the University of Wageningen

⁵ More information can be found on the website: <http://www.kitlv.nl/nl/research-projects-confronting-caribbean-challenges/>

SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

The Caribbean is one of the world's most disaster-prone regions, having suffered 187 hazards in the previous sixty years (Schwartz 2015). Given the economic situation on the islands and their dependence on agriculture and tourism, they are particularly susceptible to these hazards. On top of that, these hazards create or increase different environmental issues into a serious threat for the islands. The changing climate strengthens these hazards but is also a complex situation in terms of responsibilities and hard to address on different scales such as the international level, the Caribbean region and within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. But in fact, the greater vulnerability of the Caribbean islands, whether sovereign or not, requires at least responses on a national and international scale and thus a feeling of (shared) responsibility. How are we going to secure this engagement? Who cares for these non-sovereign islands that themselves do not contribute significantly to environmental degradation yet suffer from it disproportionately? Action is needed, but not forthcoming. Main actors on the global scene such as the United Nations (UN), and international treaties, such as Paris 2015, are all about the world's states and their willingness to cooperate on environmental issues. At the same time, several of these states that sign the international treaties also represent the interest of their non-sovereign territories – or at least are supposed to do so. One urgent question is whether the larger states really take their responsibility with regard to those non-sovereign islands. The political in-between of the Dutch Caribbean islands and their relations with the European Netherlands need to be addressed as it influences how they are able to cope with environmental issues.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

To discover what happened during the aftermath of hurricane Irma and Maria on St. Maarten and Saba looking at waste governance, and to relate these events to the practice of sovereignty and responsibility within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, this study contains different chapters. The first chapter introduced the topic, formulated the problem and explained the relevance of this research project. In the following chapters, I first introduce the scholarly debate in the postcolonial academic field where I focus on the concepts of sovereignty, responsibility and environmental degradation. This is described in my theoretical framework, which provides the lens

how I approach my research problem. Second, I discuss my methodical framework. This chapter formulates the research design by describing the processes of data collection and data analysis. Moreover, I reflect upon doing post-disaster research and my positionality. In chapter 4, the historical context situates the research project. In doing so, I describe the history of hurricanes during the time of the West India Company. Second, I set out the decolonization policy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the ambiguities within this process, that still take place. Third, I describe my research area where I discuss the demographic and political aspects. Afterwards, I conclude the chapter with presenting my findings that I've gathered during my internship before my fieldwork. This section can be seen as a pre-analysis and preparation for my research on the islands of St. Maarten and Saba. Chapter 5 is the empirical chapter where I present my findings of the research. I describe the practice of sovereignty and responsibility on the two different islands that belong to the Kingdom of the Netherlands although having both a different constitutional relationship with the European Netherlands. In chapter 6, I discuss the findings of chapter 5 in relation to each other. In this section, the research question will be answered. I will end with a discussion in chapter 7 where I connect the stories that I tell about St. Maarten and Saba with the main conceptual themes proposed in my theoretical framework. Last but not least, I reflect upon my research, limitations and recommendations for further research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE DEBATE OF A POSTCOLONIAL LENS

To create a lens how I approach my research, the theoretical framework of this study is set out in this section. The Kingdom of the Netherlands as it exists nowadays is a result of colonialism. Colonialism within the Kingdom has been officially abolished in 1954, and therefore a logical lens to approach my research problem is a postcolonial lens. Postcolonial research aims to “analyze the critical connections between past and present, metropolis and colony, colonizer and colonized” (Blunt, 2005; p.176).

While postcolonialism strives to be able to produce a critique of modern power from the condition of the colonized, there appears to be increasing skepticism regarding the use of the term postcolonial as a descriptive label for contemporary conditions. On the one hand, to contextualize the problematic aspect of postcolonialism, it is useful to look at the word itself. The post in postcolonial signifies a disciplinary field that began after colonialism. However, it is argued that it must be acknowledged that forms of colonialism have all but disappeared (Dirlik 2000). Framing postcolonialism this way makes the term ironic, as it implies that society has moved beyond colonial attitudes and aspirations, and is (*actively*) pursuing equality amongst countries' standard of living which can be questioned in today's world. On the other hand, postcolonialism does not need to claim that society has moved beyond colonial attitudes but that the legacies of colonialism are still present in today's society. Looking at Fanon's famous work *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he debates the “principle of reciprocal exclusivity” and the work of Said, where he argues that the false image of the Orient is fabricated by Western thinkers is still present in the form of chaos, corruption and coups it seems that the creation of colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance. In this respect, postcolonialism studies the afterlives of colonialism. So, on the one hand, postcolonialism strives to leave the past behind in persuading that “the past is another country; they do things differently there” (Hartley, 1953). However, critique of postcolonialism also argues that the past is not dead and is not even past (Faulkner, 1951).

How to frame postcolonial in this research, acknowledging the debate that is going on. As Gregory (2004) proposes, we need to rethink the ‘lazy’ separations between

past, present and future (p.7). There is a period of *between* colonialism and postcolonialism which is crucial to acknowledge, as it implies a renewed focus on institutions that provides space for connections and encounters between (former) colonizers and colonized in the process of *decolonization*. Acknowledging the critique of framing today's world as postcolonial, I will explore this phase *between* colonialism and postcolonialism within the Kingdom of the Netherlands meaning that the interactions are based on a colonial history and strives to leave this history behind but are still in the process of doing so. While touching upon this unresolved debate within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I look at past research that has taken place on the aspects of sovereignty, responsibility and environment. To examine the past research on the contemporary conditions of the political relations in this postcolonial Kingdom, a moment of crisis is reviewed. This crisis, the Hurricane season of 2017, may be one of painful realities; it might also be one of possibility. Referring back to the title of my thesis, a quote often heard on the islands during the aftermath of hurricane Irma and Maria is; never waste a good crisis!

SOVEREIGNTY

Sovereignty is one of the oldest political concepts in the world and is today still relevant but also harder to determine. To put it extremely simple, sovereignty means that a state has full, independent authority over a geographic area. According to the Charter of the United Nations, Article 2(4) is the principle of state sovereignty the implication of both "territorial integrity", the rule against intervention, and "political independence", self-governing of nation states.⁶

Looking at the transformation of the concept sovereignty, (Prinsen, Blaise 2017) describe how it has its origins in the Western world, when negotiations resulted in the seventeenth-century's Peace of Westphalia in Europe. The treaties at the foundation of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia introduced the principle of a state's right to self-determination, or the non-intervention by outside powers and sovereignty in matters of local policymaking. These peace treaties also asserted for the first time that, in principle, all states were equal. Arguably, the Peace of Westphalia was the foundation for early nineteenth-century nationalism, where state sovereignty was

⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.un-documents.net/a25r2625.htm>

taken by nationalist movements. Until then, the sovereign states that had emerged were generally ruled by elites on the basis of hereditary claims or divine right (p.58). The right to sovereignty of these elites was fundamentally challenged by the French Revolution's Declaration of the Rights of the Citizen, which stated, "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation" (p.58). Subsequent nationalist declarations of independence in the nineteenth century built on this principle of connecting sovereignty with all the people of the land. As a last stage of transformation, Prinsen and Blaise (2017) describe how during the mid-twentieth-century, in the year 1945, the contours of the postwar order in Europe were not yet fixed. This new order influenced the status of the former colonies linked to Europe (Wilder 2014). The converging pressures of anticolonial nationalism, European neocolonialism, American globalism, and UN internationalism made it appear that decolonization was the next important step to the notion of state sovereignty. The "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples", made by the UN in 1960, proclaimed that "all peoples have an inalienable right to their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory," and it declared that this "process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible" (Prinsen, Blaise 2017; p.59). In addition, the UN declared, "the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism in all its manifestations" (p.59). From here on, people living in a defined territory had the international right to sovereignty and by the mid-1970s, most colonies had become independent sovereign states.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s most colonized islands opted for independence, but since the early 1980s no non-self-governing island has acquired full independence from its colonial metropole (Prinsen, Blaise 2017). Today, these 'last colonies' (Aldrich, Connell 1998) or 'confetti of empire' (Guillebaud 1976) lay scattered across the globe, mainly situated in the Atlantic, Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Indian Ocean. With a few exceptions, they are all islands, and the wide majority have populations of less than half a million, many even less than 100,000 (Veenendaal, Oostindie 2017). (Bonilla 2017) asks when the dream of sovereignty died in the Caribbean. But is it sovereignty, as described above, which has been strived for? Are we *in* its wake to search of another type of sovereignty?

The Caribbean islands invite us to revise the definition of sovereignty as a result of a horrifying history. A history that still bounds the Caribbean islands with large European (metropole) states nowadays and therefore influences their sovereignty. This political reality is especially evident in the Caribbean, where the political landscape is made up of a plethora of governmental arrangements with the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and the United States (Mulder, 2018).

In this section I describe theoretical approaches of sovereignty which, I argue, are relevant for the small postcolonial Caribbean Islands. After, I describe sovereignty in relationship to the environment, where I touch upon the environment as the example of a common good which doesn't pay any attention to human created borders.

SOVEREIGNTY OF POSTCOLONIAL CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Most Caribbean societies have currently faced a half-century of independence, or postcolonial revolution. Academics throughout the world have studied what exactly postcolonial sovereignty has meant for Caribbean people and what the concrete legacies of this modernist project looks like (Adler-Nissen, Gad 2013, Pugh 2017, Bonilla 2017). However, when describing the gained sovereignty as postcolonial we remain in the heritage of colonialism, which continues to form our experiences. Bonilla (2017) describes how the Caribbean islands are disenchanted with the promises of postcolonial sovereignty but still unable to move beyond its conceptual frameworks and normative expectations. Fanon's ontology (Fanon, 1963) can be useful in asking ourselves what forms of being and imaging are possible within the colonial categories we have inherited. Rather than leading us to rehabilitate or expand Western notions of freedom and sovereignty, Fanon provincializes Western philosophy as one (overdetermined) way of understanding the world.

When looking at the work of Louverture, who writes about the legacies of the 1790s revolution in Saint-Domingue, we already see a different way of approaching sovereignty. Louverture described the revolution in Saint-Domingue by recognizing the historical developments that made it possible for Saint-Domingue to be a self-governing and economically independent partner of France (Wilder 2009). Louverture seemed to believe that emancipation could be institutionalized and existing colonialism could be transcended only through a formal affiliation with

imperial France. In other words, he argued that self-determination for Saint-Domingue would be possible without state sovereignty. The political arrangement that Louverture envisioned and enacted would have fundamentally reconfigured the colonial character of Saint-Domingue (by ending French sovereignty over local affairs), the imperial relation between France and the colony (by redefining it as a partnership), the republican character of the French nation-state (by sanctioning decentralized legal pluralism), and the national character of the republic (by constituting the republic as a multinational federation) (Wilder, 2009; p.121). However, these factors led Napoleon to destroy the colony entirely instead of to sanction the autonomy of a society of freed slaves led by a black general (ibid.) This historically possible system of shared sovereignty — colonial emancipation without national independence—thus proved to be politically impossible at that time.

Also, for Césaire (1946), postcolonial freedom, understood in terms of self-management and economic liberty, would require political imagination and invention, not just the mechanical implementation of formal territorial independence (Wilder, 2009). His spirit is present in projects that seek to convert formal liberty into substantive freedom by restructuring rather than rejecting the juridical-political partnership between the overseas departments and a multicultural French republic, of which, as he argues, Antilleans have always been an integral part and on which they have enduring legal, material, and moral claims (ibid.). Using the imperial conditions as the starting point for these emancipatory projects, Antilleans claimed France as theirs and thus challenged the unitary and territorial assumptions how the image of the French state was framed (Wilder, 2014; p.18). These arguments from influential thinkers about the French state and colonies, argue to invent forms of decolonization that would secure self-determination without the need for state sovereignty.

During the time of Louverture and Césaire, this approach to sovereignty seemed impossible. However, nowadays, sovereignty in the (Caribbean) islands' context indeed seems to be more about power to negotiate interdependencies rather than following the Westphalian principles of state sovereignty. Islands who hold constitutional ties to their metropolises are actively and creatively modifying the shape of Westphalian sovereignty and so contours of an *Islandian* sovereignty is emerging

(Prinsen, Blaise 2017). Or, according to Veenendaal & Oostindie (2017), another approach to sovereignty is emerging where former colonies seem to opt for exploring the fine line between autonomy and sovereignty. Veenendaal & Oostindie approach the sovereignty of islands as a third category that is comprised of so-called non-sovereign territories, which in many ways can be seen as political hybrids, enjoying some but not all of the privileges of fully sovereign states. In other words, non-sovereign islands seem to be expressing a different appetite for sovereignty, in which they are negotiating innovative autonomy arrangements rather than seeking Westphalian state sovereignty (ibid.).

The lack of full autonomy, combined with the colonial history, would have expected different outcomes such as a resolute break with the motherland rather than staying linked to the former colonizers. This difference is rooted in the legacies of slavery and the particular way the “problem of freedom” and the “problem of sovereignty” have been entwined in post-plantation societies (Bonilla 2017). However, comparative analyses have found that non-sovereign islands tend to have much better development indicators than sovereign islands (Prinsen, Blaise 2017, Veenendaal, Oostindie 2017). In comparison to small sovereign states, non-sovereign entities are on average better off economically, can rely on metropolitan protection for the functioning of democracy, human rights and territorial integrity, and their citizens have the passport of the metropolis giving them the right of abode there (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001). Apparently, material advantages are valued above the more abstract values embodied by the choice for independence. Veenendaal and Oostindie (2017) describe this non-sovereignty as the ‘head versus heart dilemma’ since the political status is perceived as a rationally pragmatic, yet emotionally and/or ideologically unsatisfactory political arrangement (p.27).

As a last note, the discontinuity of following Westphalian principles is not only relevant for the former colonies, but also for the metropolitan areas. (Krasner 2001) points out that the Westphalian principles such as non-intervention are professed only when convenient. He concludes that the principle of state sovereignty is “organized hypocrisy”, because large powers have continued to violate the principles of non-intervention. The diverse debates over the last two decades about

sovereignty thus suggest that the idea of the Westphalian sovereign state may be waning or undergoing fundamental modifications.

The condition of non-sovereignty itself certainly has influenced politics in the Caribbean region given that both postcolonial sovereignty but also Westphalian sovereignty more broadly is best understood as “normative ideals” rather than actually existing conditions (Bonilla 2017). Some scholars even go so far to argue that the majority of Caribbean societies are de facto non-sovereign, since even those that have achieved a formal sovereign status struggle to assert self-determination over their political and economic development (Mulder 2018; p. 13). Furthermore, within the form of an island (non-) sovereignty there is some remarkable variation in federacy arrangements and the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the smaller, non-sovereign units (Watts 2009). The six Caribbean islands that are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are the perfect example of this. The Kingdom of the Netherlands exists of four autonomous countries, namely Aruba, Curacao, St. Maarten and the Netherlands. The three other Dutch Caribbean islands, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba are integrated within the Netherlands as a special municipality. This remarkable and unique structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is set out further under the section Context (see page 53).

SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Also in relation to the environment is the idea of sovereignty, as developed in the traditional Westphalian system, undermined (Biermann, Dingwerth 2004). The sovereign borders, associated with the Westphalian system, are no longer ‘environmentally’ sovereign. In earlier times states assumed ‘full’ and ‘absolute’ sovereignty which means that they could freely use resources within their territories regardless of the impact this might have on neighboring states, which is known as the so-called Harmon doctrine (Schwartz 2015). The concept of sovereignty over natural resources was initially associated with the demands of anti-colonialism and self-determination, expressed through a series of UN General Assembly resolutions in the 1950s and 1960s (Elliot 2008). Today, framing sovereignty as a concept to enable a state to do whatever it likes is outdated since activities of one state often bear upon those of others and, therefore, upon their sovereign rights. As Sassen (1999) observes, pollution and environmental degradation has the capacity to ‘undo

the particular form of the intersection of territory and sovereignty embedded in the modern state and the modern state system'. With the expansion of environmental concerns in the 1970s and 1980s, where greater attention was paid to the transboundary and global aspects of pollution, it was recognized that pollutants dispersed across state borders through air and ocean currents (Elliot 2008; p.60).

To establish solidarity and cooperation between states in solving these transboundary environmental problems, international environmental treaties have been created. With signing the environmental agreements, a new 'sovereignty' emerges where it seems that the only way most states can realize and express their sovereignty is through participation in the international system. The last three decades different treaties have been signed between sovereign states that set guidelines for rights and obligations with respect to nature conservation and environmental protection. In short, some of these treaties entail first and foremost injunctions or prohibitions for sovereign states (and peoples) to act in a certain way in their own jurisdictions, while others primarily relate to obligations with respect to neighbors, 'international areas' or the global environment as such (Schrijver 1995). By ratifying (or acceding to) a treaty, a state accepts the obligations under it, for example as regards the protection of wetlands, forests, wildlife or natural resources. These international agreements influence state sovereignty since they restrict state action, or influence political power with obligations that force national jurisdictions. An example of such an international treaty is principle 2 of The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Rio in 1992:

States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. (Emphasis added)⁷

⁷ Retrieved from: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/RIO_E.PDF

This principle embodies the core: states are “in principle” free to decide how to manage and utilize their resources; whether and to what extent they will protect their environment. The second statement in the above provision however requires that states must make sure that their activities at home do not produce significant negative consequences on the environment of others. These two characteristics of sovereignty in relation to protection of environment imply the rights granted to states and the responsibilities imposed upon them by international law.

Besides that, when states have a common concern which requires common responsibility, for example shared responsibility to reduce carbon footprint, this requires them to reach on consensus in a collective sovereignty. Such sovereignty may soften a state’s individual sovereignty where it has to adjust existing domestic laws (Maguire 2010). What is the meaning of boundaries in this ‘collective’ sovereignty? One could argue that there has been little change to the boundaries of a state. According to (Litfin 1997), international environmental policies and state sovereignty do not necessarily stand in opposition to one another. Negotiating and ratifying treaties remains the prerogative of the sovereign state and states have the right to determine their own external policies. In other words, the legal status of states as sovereign does not change because of multilateral environmental agreements. Taking this track, one might claim that only the state possesses sufficient authority, resources, and territorial control to enforce environmental rules and norms (Litfin 1993; p.95-96). As long as a state does not ratify a treaty, the state is not obliged to the restrictions. And, on the other hand, when the state does ratify the treaty, it obliges all citizens and companies within their territory to follow the restrictions which strengthen the internal sovereignty.

There is however, growing pressure for some form of more effective intergovernmental body for the environment. The 1989 Hague Declaration (which was originally designed for the ozone layer deterioration problem), signed by the governments of twenty-four sovereign states, called for such a body to have effective decision-making authority even in circumstances where ‘unanimous agreement has not been reached’, suggesting that states could be bound without their sovereign consent. Second, to some extent, the activism of civil society and environmental NGOs has been a response to the inadequacies and incapacities of the state, with

NGOs filling the gaps in environmental governance where states have been unwilling or unable to do so (Elliot 2008).

Within this study I look at different degrees of sovereignty within one Kingdom. Since the Kingdom is the ultimate sovereign state, it is interesting who the state represents. Sovereign states that sign the international treaties also represent the interest of 'their' non-sovereign territories. Being at the frontline of a changing climate, (non-sovereign) SIDS hold a serious stake in climate negotiations (de Agueda Corneloup, Mol 2014). However, these islands usually are marginalized in the international political arena, due to their lack of structural power. Many have argued that this particular vulnerability of small island states calls for new norms of justice, sovereignty, and security in the climate regime (e.g. (Barnett, Adger 2003).

RESPONSIBILITY

With the Caribbean SIDS at the frontline of a changing climate, such as an increase in stronger hurricanes, and the marginal representation on the international scene, it is questioned to whom the responsibility to minimize the effects of a changing climate could be assigned. Second, environmental problems are difficult to govern due to intersectional aspects and, together with the transgression of the traditional political scale it is hard to determine who should be held responsible.

The responsibility principle is framed in many ways in different bodies of literatures. Within the environmental philosophy, John Passmore's book *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974) and Hans Jonas' book *The imperative of responsibility* (1984) set out what the relationship is with man and nature, and therefore man's responsibility in relation to environmental problems. Within the environmental business studies, the concept of *corporate social responsibility* seems a very popular term in defining responsibility towards environmental problems (e.g. (Orlitzky, Siegel et al. 2011). However, this is much focusing on private companies and the idea that self-interest can be combined with other environmental concerns. Within this research, another approach, a (postcolonial) governance approach, would be more useful. In the debate on governing and the concept of responsibility, this theme is underdeveloped

(Pellizzoni 2004). Admitting that the work of Pellizzoni is a bit 'old', I still couldn't find much literature on, specifically, a government's responsibility with regard to environmental issues. A much more popular approach seems to be the role of the civil society or international institutions. Although the role of the government, especially in the capitalist world, has changed over the past decennia with the re-dimensioning of the role of the state, I argue that, after all, (well-working democratic) governments, are the institutions with a general mandate to promote the public good and thus the wellbeing of our environment. In making my argument, I first describe how responsibility is seen within the postcolonial debate. Second, I use the different bodies of literature to develop my standpoint how I see responsibility within the postcolonial Kingdom of the Netherlands.

POSTCOLONIAL RESPONSIBILITY; DISTANCE INTO DIFFERENCE

Responsibility within the postcolonial debate is increasingly associated as a route to live ethically in a postcolonial world, whereby responsibility is tuned to past and present inequalities of this world (Noxolo, Raghuram et al. 2012). During colonization, large portions of the population were placed outside the boundaries of responsibility. Nowadays postcolonial responsibility involves that richer nations are asked to take up responsibilities for people and countries that are less wealthy due to colonization, often evoked through the figure of the poor and marginalized 'distant stranger' (Corbridge 1998). This framing of the distant stranger is problematic. As (Ferdinand 2018) calls for climate justice for the French Outré-mer, he argues that the Outré-mer perspectives require moving beyond the single geographic imaginary of France that only represents its European mainland. In his paper he argues that France is seen as a singular geographical European entity that extends its generous hand to care for its overseas citizens, for which the latter should be grateful. In other words, 'France' would be doing a service to its Outré-mer. This colonial gaze is discriminatory in the sense that it posits the Outré-mer and its citizens as being outside of France. Postcolonial responsibility should mean that we are not talking about 'distant others' but others whose lives and modes of living are still influenced by the same history of colonialism. This complex claim of belonging to people and places that are often seen as separated through difference is something that needs full attention, also within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Edward Said introduced

this idea of imaginative geographies. These are constructions that fold distance into difference through a series of spatializations (Gregory 2004; p. 17).

Although theories about postcolonial responsibility may recognize the interconnections that make up the modern world we are living in, in practice, responsible action is still located within an unequal political world that complicates both the practice and the ethics of responsibility (Noxolo, Raghuram et al. 2012). Besides recognizing that the former colonized were part of the same nation, relations of responsibility remain asymmetrical, even where these relations are based on the apparently firm political ground of a shared colonial past. For example, dependency theories and theories of neo-colonialism were extended and powerful critiques of the fact that what may be claimed as responsible action by powerful governments may be rejected as the maintenance of unequal power relations by those living in the places on which they impacted (Noxolo, Raghuram et al. 2012).

Taking responsibility is therefore an ethical arrangement that offers a way of taking account of inequalities and confronting power in a still profoundly unequal postcolonial world. It is precisely because of power differences that it is worth considering not only the possibilities of surpassing the power differentials but also the problems associated with doing so (Noxolo, Raghuram et al. 2012; p.419). Since the postcolonial seems both to be stuck in the term 'post' and the continuation of power relations that date back from colonial times, I look at different bodies of literature in exploring how we can assign responsibility and who does answer to this responsibility.

ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY

Let me start with discussing the issue of responsibility from a philosophical perspective. I use the work of Jonas to describe two basic facets of responsibility. Although Jonas' work is not focusing on postcolonialism per se, some of his arguments are an added value in describing and assigning responsibility. In his book *The Imperative of Responsibility* (1974) he questions man's place in nature. He shows that the change of civilization makes that man now has a different responsibility to the environment. Back in the days, there existed an uncluttered

civilization in which man was subordinate to the overwhelming nature. The actions of these civilizations had little impact on nature. Now, however, the modern man has taken fate into his own hands with the development of technology and impact of human action on nature. Since nature is no longer untouched by human impacts, it thus becomes an object of responsibility for man. Being capable of a deliberate choice, man is also a being to whom responsibility can be assigned (Jonas, 1974). So, man has, because of changes they made in their surroundings and the gained knowledge because of this, become responsible. If man didn't see the environmental degradation and didn't know the causes of this, then, obviously, it wouldn't make sense to say that man was responsible for what they had done. This implicates that knowledge is an important aspect of responsibility. Therefore, I argue, knowledge is a basic facet in assigning responsibility to someone.

Second, Jonas argues that man cannot only control nature but is also part of nature. Through caring for natural life, we affirm human life. Jonas believed that we must move on from "ethics of here and now," to an ethics that reflects our responsibility for distant people and future generations. Especially in relation to future generations does our responsibility come forth; future generations are vulnerable to our actions without being able to reciprocate or even to protest (Turolto, Barilan 2008). The responsibility to those who will come in the future is especially important in relation to the environment and the changing climate (see also (Armstrong 2006, Hobson 2006, Page 2007). Therefore, I argue, taking care is another basic facet of responsibility for man. Within the postcolonial theory, questions are raised about the responsibilities that people in different parts of the world bear to each other and their ability and desire to care for each other (Raghuram, Madge et al. 2009). Routing care and responsibility through postcolonial geographies incites us towards a more embodied pragmatic responsiveness, one that makes a 'care-full' recognition of postcolonial interaction.

What I'm missing in the work of Jonas and the broad division of former colonizers and colonized is that it is not defined who is responsible. It remains vague who is responsible in taking care and providing knowledge to protect the environment. Besides that, how long will we remain in the past and think in terms of colonizer and colonized? On some level, we're all responsible for taking care of the environment

nowadays. In the current debate on environmental problems, the focus lies heavily on the individual citizen; he/she need to change his/her consumers' role in order to help solve environmental problems. In this debate all individuals appear to be considered as equally appropriate subjects of responsibility, as if either *all* individuals are responsible for the environment or *no* individuals are responsible for the environment (Fahlquist 2009). I do not disagree with the claim that it is ultimately a matter of individuals behaving in ways that promote a better environment, since the fundamental unit in society is the individual citizen and institutions are created and upheld by individuals acting together. However, focusing too much on one's individual responsibility is problematic because individual (social and economic) differences are not acknowledged to an adequate extent.

The risk of putting too much focus on the behavior of individuals can also come at the cost of illuminating the vital role of institutions. (McEwan, Goodman 2010) draw attention to the problems of focusing on individual responsibility which can turn attention away from the political, institutional and structural power. If responsibility is ascribed to governments and corporations, there is a better chance of creating a society in which the opportunities to act in an environmentally friendly way increase (Fahlquist 2009; p.9). Similarly, (Shue 1988) argued that some duties should be assigned to governmental institutions instead of individuals because it is likely to be more efficient. I argue as well that a great share of responsibility should be assigned to governments. I set out this point in the next paragraphs.

ANSWERING TO RESPONSIBILITY

Pellizzoni argues that the origin of the word responsibility comes from the Latin verb *respondere*, which means to answer (Pellizzoni 2004; p. 546). A good response entails listening to a question or need, which requires openness, a willingness to understand and confront the others commitments and concerns, and to look for a possible terrain of sharing (ibid; p.557). Ultimately, it requires a dialogue, not a monologue. A government may respond to what it deems to be a call, but the 'other' (for example the civil society) may not accept its response as such. Being responsible must also involve acceptance that the 'other' in relation to whom a government may consider themselves responsible have no universal, moral or legal

reason for accepting their responsibility (Noxolo, Raghuram et al. 2012). Responsible and caring-action therefore involves, especially in the postcolonial debate, an openness and vulnerability to that which most resists European thought: those aspects of the 'other' that is not shared and is not comfortable due to a colonial past.

Responding can happen in different ways. You can respond in advance, anticipating on a possible situation. Or you can respond to an event that already happened and therefore, responsibility can be seen as a reaction. Or as Pellizzoni calls it; you can respond in in-order-to (avoid) or because of (.... happened). As we have seen in the work of Jonas, the knowledge that man has developed was based on events that have happened. *Because of* environmental degradation, we know that we are responsible to take care for nature. Also within the postcolonial debate it is argued how the 'global North' should take responsibility, and therefore care, towards the 'global South' *because of* the history of colonialism. Pellizzoni also uses the term care in analyzing responsibility. However, he argues that care is anticipatory but does also refer to because-of-motives (p.548). Parents should take care of their child *because of* their family band, *in order to* prevent that the child will be in trouble.

A forward looking (in-order-to) response focuses on capacity and resources where a backward looking (because-of) response is a notion that focuses on causation and blameworthiness (Fahlquist 2009). In explaining these two different kinds of responsibilities, Fahlquist refers to the ethic formula "ought to implies can" described by Immanuel Kant. It claims that an agent, if morally obliged to perform a certain action, must logically be able to perform it. However, in some circumstances it is more a question of "can implies ought". One of the arguments for the principle Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CDR) is based on a similar notion (Fahlquist 2009; p.117). CDR is the principle stating that rich countries should bear a greater proportion of responsibility for the changing climate. There are two very different justifications for CDR. First, rich countries are said to have a greater responsibility to solve the problems of the changing climate *because* they, historically, contributed more to the emissions of carbon dioxide. Second, rich countries have a greater *capacity* primarily in terms of power and resources to solve these problems. Whereas the former justification is in line with the backward-looking

notion of responsibility, the latter is more in line with a forward-looking notion of responsibility.

On a national scale, it is the task of the government to take their forward-looking responsibility. An example from Adger and Arnell et al. (2005) shows how a response to hurricane risk is determined by many factors, one of which is construction technology, including the availability of hurricane wind-resistant glass for windows. However, the availability of this glass alone is not enough. People need to have the availability to find out that these windows exist, purchase them, effectively install them and maintain them. Even though the society may need to adopt the change, the change should come from and be regulated by the government. In other words, the responsibility of governments is to create systems to make it easier for individuals to respond to in environmentally friendly ways.

The greater the extent to which the government has taken their forward-looking responsibility, the greater the extent to which it is reasonable to ascribe both backward-looking and forward-looking responsibility to individuals when they do not choose the environmentally friendly option. Individuals are blameworthy for acts that contribute to environmental problems, e.g., refraining from recycling, driving instead of using public transport or a bicycle, when it is reasonable to expect them to choose the environmentally friendly option. This means that when there is a reasonable alternative to act in a more environmentally friendly way or when the cost and effort of performing the environmentally friendly act was reasonable an individual is to blame for not choosing that course of action (Fahlquist 2009).

GOVERNING TO GOVERNANCE

Some would criticize this linear line between government and society. The caring state has been overtaken nowadays, to a remarkable extent, by new arrangements between the government and other (international) institutions, sometimes occurring in the private sector. This implies a transition from governing to governance with the development from a caring, more authoritarian state to a co-operative neoliberal state. In other words, a shift from a command-and-control to 'voluntary' regulations with for example private companies, NGOs or international science institutions.

These 'voluntary' corporations may have several benefits, such as taking advantage of (business) expertise and developing networks for cooperation, however it also raises several issues.

One of the issues is that the involvement of new actors and institutions leads to governance with greater fragmentation. This fragmentation tends to follow the logic of unresponsiveness or 'finger pointing'. This is both relevant for the neoliberal world we created as well as the postcolonial modern world nowadays, where denial of responsibility becomes a game of 'pass pass' between scales of postcolonial governance (Sylvester 2016). Responsibility may be denied by simply being passed on. I argue that governments therefore must come even more to terms with steering for sustainable development in a radically polycentric environment. Governmental institutions can make the coordination and cooperation possible that is needed. The second issue, related to the issue described above, is the need of a government to be a working and representative government. Referring back to what a good response is as described by Pellizzoni (2004), it is needed that the government responds to the needs of its citizens to secure safety. In small (non)sovereign states, this issue of a working representative democracy is challenging. According to Veenendaal (2014) smallness and insularity have a profound, and to a certain extent mutually reinforcing, effect on politics and democracy. Due to the overlap between private and professional relationships, this may generate conflicts of interests and therefore result in misbehavior of politicians (ibid.). Second, since voting behavior in small, insular jurisdictions is usually based on personal considerations rather than programmatic or policy-related preferences, real political representation may actually be undermined (Veenendaal 2013).

Within the context of unstable and unrepresentative political power relations, it opens up possibilities for a complex politics of ascription of responsibility. Although responsibility may be passed on, due to fragmentation of governance or a painful history of colonialism, I argue that it is a matter of the government's commitment to respond. The government has a central position due to its fundamental role in providing goods and services.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

In this section I first discuss the scope of the environment and why this study frames the hurricanes Irma and Maria as hazards and not as 'natural disasters'. Second, I set out two facets of environmental degradation. The first one is related to colonialism, the second one is related to waste problems occurring specifically on small islands such as in the Caribbean.

THE SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDS

The reason why I got interested in the aspect of environment with regard to the Dutch Caribbean Islands is shortly described in my introduction. When following the course Postcolonial Europe at the Radboud University, I looked up these islands on Google where Google became a sort of TripAdvisor, showing images of white beaches, palm trees and green lush hills. After hurricane Irma and Maria hit the islands, these green peaceful images were replaced by images of houses that were fallen apart, overturned cars, destroyed harbors and Dutch soldiers handing out relief goods. These contrasting images of the environment, which changed in a short period, fascinated me.

The concept of the environment has a considerable scope and can be interpreted in different ways. A very common picture of the environment is the natural environment such as air, water, soil and life that propagates through these natural sources, nature itself. The environment has become a broader concept that not only relates to the natural environment but also to the environment created by man, the built environment. Furthermore, the environment can be defined as the circumstances, objects or conditions by which one is surrounded. From this point of view, the environment includes matters such as nature conservation, spatial planning, housing but also health. Following this, hazards such as hurricanes harm both socio-economic and ecological systems as well. Within this study I look at the issue of (additional) waste after hurricanes Irma and Maria. This additional waste has consequences for the environment, both for the natural environment as well as the circumstances people live in during the aftermath. Especially with the absence of proper (disaster) waste management strategies, it can eventually put health and safety of victims at a risk.

What is striking is that when hurricane Irma and Maria hit the islands, a lot of articles in the newspaper and in the academic world described these hurricanes as ‘natural disasters’ (see e.g. Seraphin 2019). Because of the changing climate induced by man, different scholars argue that hurricanes cannot be assigned as ‘natural disasters’ (Cannon 1993, Smith 2006). I argue as well that these hurricanes cannot be framed as ‘natural disasters’. In doing so, I use the difference between a hazard and a disaster. A hazard is a situation where there is a threat to life, health, environment or property. The active plate boundary of the Caribbean’s geological setting has occurred hazards throughout the centuries such as hurricanes, flooding, droughts and mudslides (Jaffe 2009, Schwartz 2015). However, hurricanes appear to be increasing in frequency and intensity in recent decades, presumably as the result of a global changing climate (IPPC 2012). Likewise, the rising of sea level connected to global warming will have devastating effects on low-lying islands like those in the Caribbean as well (Jaffe 2009). Due to the small geographic size, high exposure to a range of hazards, high concentration of settlements and infrastructure along low-lying coastal strips, narrow natural resource base, limited infrastructural and human resources and so on, the SIDS of the Caribbean stand out of being most vulnerable to negative impacts of the changing climate (Mertz, Halsnæs et al. 2009). This means that the hazards that take place hit the region harder because of their vulnerable geographic location, and the subordinate position within the global capitalist system. Therefore, hazards have the probability to turn into a disaster. In other words, it is argued that the vulnerability of this region make hazards a disaster, a vulnerability that is induced by socio-economic postcolonial conditions that is or can be modified by man; (O’Keefe, Westgate et al. 1976) already argued that it would be right to replace the term natural disaster with a more appropriate term social or political disaster.

COLONIALISM AS ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The roots of environmental degradation can be found in the history of the plantation economies and the colonial legacy (Mount, O’Brien 2013). Western imperialism radically altered the landscapes of the colonized lands at an unprecedented speed and scale. The Caribbean had a large Amerindian population that was known for subsistence agriculture and fishing where the relationship between the population and the environment was balanced. However, beginning in the 16th century with the

voyages of the Spanish, the region became a territorial battleground among colonists (Mount, O'Brien 2013). From the Spanish Crown's interest in natural resources, to the desire on the part of the British and French for settlement in the region and the Dutch desire for trade, the region became a central hub for exploitation and extraction (Boswell, 2009). Sugarcane production and refining dominated the region for centuries, encouraging the brutal industry of African slavery between the 16th and early 19th century. These systems and processes led to the exploitation of both land and people (ibid.).

The colonizers were encountered with what they saw as a tropical paradise. The environmental degradation in the Caribbean, occurred by the colonizers, led to the rise of the natural sciences in Europe (Jaffe 2009). It was precisely these new forms of seeing degradation of land that formed the basis for modern Western ecological sciences (Grove 1996). The notion of discovering the Garden of Eden and the fear of losing it has been a recurrent theme fueling conservation, extending from colonial times to the present (ibid.). Nowadays, expatriates or residents returning from extended stays abroad "discover" the natural beauty of the Caribbean islands only to realize how fragile and imperiled this beauty is (Jaffe 2009).

Another paradox is the image of cities and all its aspects in the Caribbean islands. Besides the use of (natural) resources, colonialism also created a built environment which reflected colonial values, imperial nostalgias and modernizing aspirations. Colonial cities were important sites in the transfer of modern, European values to new worlds and functioned as important centers of power for administering colonized people and resources (Jaffe 2009). In the work of Jaffe, she sets out how this vision of the modern colonial city forms a sharp contrast with how urban areas are perceived nowadays within environmental movements in the Caribbean. Urban areas, present from the early days of colonialism, are neglected from celebratory descriptions of lush, tropical settings and supposedly pristine islands nowadays. Many of the region's tourism-based economies are strongly dependent on (the idea of) unspoiled natural landscapes and an image of the region as paradise. In a similar manner as where urban areas are neglected from the supposedly pristine islands, the "natives" are in colonial accounts generally depicted as childlike creatures, incapable of managing their natural surroundings (Jaffe 2009). The situation of

outsiders and cosmopolitan elites organizing education around the theme of ecological vulnerability is present in the contemporary Caribbean.

The Caribbean natural *and* built environments, which are to a large extent product of the inequitable relations of power under colonialism, continue to shape contemporary social relations (Jaffe 2016; p.47). The colonial legacy is more than environmental degradation. The history of exploitation of resources left countries destroyed and dependent on colonial entities following (semi-) independence in the early to mid-20th century. With peripheral economies that are dependent for their development on the metropole areas, the Caribbean states struggle to build strong economies that can compete in the global economic and political world system. Nowadays, the region is expected to address the consequences of a changing climate, yet there is limited recognition within the global community of how the history of exploitation has limited the ability of Caribbean nations to effectively address climate change impacts. Especially in the Caribbean region, the ties with the former motherland are needed to address and adapt to this changing climate, although this change of climate is mostly occurred by these motherlands due to the industrialization process that occurred in Western Europe. This growing sentiment among scholars that the region's vulnerability must (also) be viewed in light of centuries of colonial exploitation poses pressing questions about the theoretical and practical dimension of global debt and responsibility towards the Caribbean region.

WASTE AS ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Insular ecosystems, such as the Caribbean region, face a strong interdependence of natural and human systems whereby environmental degradation happens rapidly. The “natural” landscapes are implied to be representative of the island, without the note of the fact that many of these are endangered. The green focus on environmental problems comes forth from the tourism industry's representations of paradise-like landscapes. However, with millions of tourists visiting these islands, it leaves a significant effect on the environment in the Caribbean region. Among the several issues faced by these islands over the years, increasing waste generation is becoming one of the major problems (Riquelme, Méndez et al. 2016). The considerable amount of waste emerging from the tourism industry, as well as

population growth, advocates that sustainable methods need to be adopted for waste management. Also due to their insular geography with a lack of a hinterland and their fragile environmental and ecological characteristics, a proper waste management is needed. Furthermore, the implication that waste can be seen as belonging to nobody is important to the sense of responsibility, or lack of it.

Waste management on small islands faces some numerous difficulties. These difficulties include limited space availability, restricted recycling and resale opportunities, and impacts on the local environment, particularly when the island is small-sized, densely populated and tourist dependent (Camilleri-Fenech, Oliver-Solà et al. 2018). The well-documented impacts on the local environment that occur due to a lack of waste management includes land and beach degradation, increased surface and marine pollution, and raised risks for human health (ibid). Most of the waste treatment options are land intensive and the limited availability of suitable locations makes that the demand for land comes with conflicts (Agamuthu, Herat 2014). The limiting characteristics of the territory greatly hinder the activities of waste management and entails high management costs, compounded by the need to transfer waste.

Waste collection is an important functional element of the waste management system. The absence of a proper waste collection system completely disrupts the waste management flow and strengthens illegal and unwanted practices like dumping at forbidden sites and backyard burning of wastes (Mohee, Mauthoor et al. 2015). One type of collecting waste is using a landfill. Landfilling is the act of ultimate disposal of waste materials and is the least desired option according to the waste management hierarchy (Nehrenheim 2014). Nonetheless, it is highly practiced on many islands. The main reason for high landfilling is the absence of other waste management techniques in addition to the fact that landfilling is relatively cheap compared to the other waste management options (Renou, Givaudan et al. 2008). Despite the fact that landfilling represents the cheapest way of waste disposal, it has a negative influence on the tourism-based economy because of the view and safety in case of ocean-dumping (Eckelman, Ashton et al. 2014). But also due to the loss of potentially useful waste materials such as recyclables. Recycling, on the other hand, is the most desired and environmentally beneficial. Recycling is the process of

separating, collecting and preparing waste materials such that they could be reprocessed or remanufactured into another material (Mohee, Mauthoor et al. 2015). However, recycling is not undertaken on large scale on many islands (Riquelme, Méndez et al. 2016). This may be due to the following factors that hinder its successful practice: a low level of awareness and sensitization, the type of pre-collection undertaken (Curbside, drop-off, buy-back centers) and due to the unavailability of land to store the recyclables.

To collect waste properly, four challenges are important to consider, namely institutional, financial, educational and technical aspects (Mohee, Mauthoor et al. 2015). Institutional challenges refer mainly to lack of policies and strategies on behalf of the government to promote waste management approaches. A major issue classified under institutional challenges is the absence of formal procedures, policies and appropriate regulations pertaining to waste generation and management (UNEP 1999, Squires 2006, (Riquelme, Méndez et al. 2016). Despite that certain regulations do exist on some islands, these are not working since the citizens are either unaware of the existing regulations or the regulations are not properly enforced and are thus ineffective (Mohee, Mauthoor et al. 2015). Financial challenges imply the lack of sufficient funds to develop and implement such management systems. Therefore, the effectiveness of a waste management system depends on government priority and willingness both in regulations as in making funds available.

Another major problem on the islands is the lack of knowhow, capabilities and expertise in the field of waste management (Riquelme, Méndez et al. 2016). Local authorities that are supposed to be responsible for waste management lack properly trained personnel (Mohee, Mauthoor et al. 2015). As such, training is of utmost importance and experts must be recruited to help in the formation and training of the locals to deal with waste management technologies like recycling. Lack of knowledge from waste generators, namely the general public, intensify the complications and difficulties present on the islands (Riquelme, Méndez et al. 2016). Consequently, the general public must be encouraged to participate in waste management programs through appropriate (educational) waste management awareness campaigns.

In sum, the image of these islands as a tropical paradise forms a big contrast with some of the environmental issues that take place on this same island. Due to colonialism, environmental degradation happened on the Caribbean islands. Nowadays, the amount and management of waste forms a current threat to the environment. In the academic literature, waste as environmental degradation becomes a symbolic representation of the uneducated, not able to take care of their surroundings. It should be acknowledged that it is not only the lack of knowhow but also the importance of available financial and institutional resources.

RECAP

In this theoretical framework I touched upon the concepts of sovereignty, responsibility and environmental degradation. Environmental degradation takes place on the Caribbean islands. This occurs due to a lot of factors of which I highlighted two of them namely the legacies of colonialism and the large amount of waste. The amount of waste is partly created as a consequence of hurricanes and partly created since a lot of products need to be imported to these islands. Whereas the latter one is a structural problem, the former one is a temporary factor, although it makes the structural problems visible in a painful manner.

The occurrence of these hurricanes is documented from the sixteenth century on and are therefore not a recently phenomenon (Schwartz 2015). In the midst of the scientific controversy about the effects of a changing climate on the intensity and frequency of these hazards, there is each new year a risk of a devastating hurricane season. The people living on the islands need to confront the storms and the (old) big question remains: who cleans up the Caribbean islands and who is responsible to do so?

Can we assign responsibility to the local government or should responsibility be assigned to metropole powers because of the colonial history and more wealth? The veil of bureaucratic inefficiency, with maybe hints of racial and neocolonial attitudes about people who are incapable of caring for themselves or want “something for nothing”, have now become part of the response to the aftermath of a hurricane. It is questionable if it were the hurricanes that created such a chaos or what has been done or not done before and after the hazard. The challenge has for sure some political aspects, where I highlight the aspect of sovereignty.

While navigating through the practice of the different concepts, I'll use the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a case study. More specifically, I look at two islands that were hit during the hurricane season in 2017 which both have a different status within the Kingdom. Therefore, I can discover how the practice of sovereignty plays a role in assigning responsibility to an environmental problem, namely the lack of waste governance.

3. METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH GOAL

As stated in the introduction, this research aims to give insight how sovereignty plays a role in the feeling of and taken responsibility with regard to an environmental issue within the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017.

The overarching research question is:

How is the practice of sovereignty within the Kingdom of the Netherlands reflected in the differences between Saba (a special municipality of the Netherlands) and St. Maarten (an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands) when looking at the taken responsibility of waste governance during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017?

In answering this question, some sub questions are developed. As a preparation for my fieldwork, I first need to find out if there are any legal agreements on the issue of waste within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Since waste has its influence on the environment, I look at the wider scope of the environment as well to find out if there exist any widely supported environmental policies within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. My first sub question is therefore: *Does a well-defined and widely supported environmental policy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the Caribbean islands exist?* This question will mainly be answered by searching for policy documents, laws and treaties on the internet. This sub question has been carried out during my internship at KITLV.

Second, I want to have insight how the context influences the execution of environmental policies and legislation as well as the approach of environmental problems. In exploring this, I look at factors such as the postcolonial history, political system, financial situation etc. Therefore, another sub question is *How shape the characteristics of Saba and St. Maarten the ability and willingness to develop and execute environmental policies?* In answering this question, I use secondary data, which will be explained further in this methodology chapter.

Third, I want to have insight how sovereignty plays a role within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in responding to the issue of waste and how this influences the governance during the aftermath of the hurricane season in 2017. In doing so, I discover how the status of Saba and St. Maarten influence the response to this issue. In other words, my third sub question is *How does the status of St. Maarten and Saba within the Kingdom of the Netherlands influence the response to waste governance during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017?* This sub question will be answered by the data collected during fieldwork. How I approach the concept of sovereignty during fieldwork will be set out later in this chapter under the section operationalization.

Fourth, having explored how sovereignty influences the response during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, I need to find out how these responses are taken and seen by different stakeholders on Saba and St. Maarten. Therefore, my fourth sub question is *How is responsibility taken and perceived by different stakeholders on Saba and St. Maarten during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017?* This sub question will be answered based on the data collected during fieldwork as well. How I approach the concept of responsibility during fieldwork is set out later in this chapter under the section operationalization.

These sub-questions narrow the broader focus of the overarching question. While allowing for discovery, they provide lenses to capture the situation that I would like to understand and give direction to the data that is needed to collect: data about how sovereignty and responsibility with regard to the issue of waste are perceived on St. Maarten and Saba.

RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH QUESTION AND EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP

The theoretical framework already provided insights into how the concepts of sovereignty, responsibility and the environmental degradation are defined within this study. The theoretical framework not only shapes the research questions but also connects the research to a particular field. In other words, this framework helped in developing my position within my research about postcolonial relations. It gave me insights how to approach the different concepts and how to set up my research

questions as described above. This will also be shown under the section operationalization. The works of scholars that I have used within my theoretical framework use a mix of quantitative and qualitative research designs. Reviewing the literature and the ways in which different scholars collected their data, I set out below how I tackle my research question. In doing so, I explain the research design I worked in as well as the methods used for collecting and analyzing my data.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Although some academics used quantitative data to approach the concept of sovereignty (see for example Veenendaal, Oostindie 2017), I use a qualitative research approach for my study. The traditional view is that quantitative research examines data which are numbers, while qualitative research examines data which are narrative (Bryman 2016). The analysis of the different concepts within this research is influenced by a social process, whereby human interactions and perceptions are at the center of research. Because qualitative research involves asking the kinds of questions that focus on the why and how of human interactions and seeks to identify underlying concepts and the relationships between them (Bryman 2016) I use a qualitative research approach in answering my research questions.

There are two general approaches to identify the relationships and processes that are going on, namely inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning is a theory building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalizations about the phenomenon under investigation. Deductive reasoning is a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalization, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances. The deductive researcher works from a more general level to a more specific one to add to or contradict a theory (Bryman 2016). Since I started my research with reflecting about existing theories about sovereignty, responsibility and environmental degradation in a postcolonial world, I argue that my basis for this research is a deductive approach. However, this does not mean that I have my eyes

closed and focus only on the aspects that have been discussed in the theoretical framework. While observing and listening to my participants during fieldwork I also seek to establish generalizations about the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, the link between postcolonial sovereignty and responsibility with environmental degradation is hardly made within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Therefore, I do not exclude the option of an inductive approach later in the research when I try to link different observations and concepts.

For the best results, it would have been valued to stay longer in the field, as for example Jaffe (2016) spend twelve months in the field to discover the different social dimensions of environmental issues in the two cases she selected. However, due to a lack of time and finances, I was not able to stay longer than two months in the field. Other scholars that are discussed within my theoretical framework (e.g. Schwartz 2015) used a historical overview to make their argument. Since the phenomenon I'm studying just occurred, and again because of time restrictions, I decide to focus on a specific time period, namely before and after the hurricane season of 2017. To do justice to the limited time, I choose for a case study.

CASE STUDY

According to (Yin 1994), a case study is the preferred research approach when “how” or “why” questions are being posed. A case study is also a strategy that gives a detailed insight which is bound into time and space (Verschuren 2003). Therefore, using a case study, will lead to in-depth data that is needed to discover links between the relationships, complexities and institutional settings in order to understand the social-process between different stakeholders (Bryman 2016). Within this study, a case study research design will indeed be used to answer the overarching ‘how’ question.

To understand the differences and similarities between the cases, in other words, to explore the influence of the different status of two islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I use a multiple case-study. Multiple case studies can be used to either augur contrasting results for expected reasons or either augur similar results in the

studies (Yin 2003). This is more appropriate than a single case study in order to really set out how sovereignty plays a role.

The most frequently heard objection using a case study is its low generalizability as a consequence of the fact that only one or two cases are studied (Yin 1994). I'm aware of this, especially since the Kingdom of the Netherlands has a really unique structure. In my theoretical framework I sketched how waste as an environmental issue is common for SIDS, and I aim therefore to contribute to the academic field, in providing a research that engages with both waste and sovereignty, two often debated terms within the Caribbean region.

In sum, I will engage in multiple case studies and deductive research in order to evaluate which (positive or negative) effects of sovereignty plays a role in how responsibility is taken and perceived during the aftermath of hurricane Irma, looking at waste governance.

SELECTION OF CASES

Both cases show clear similarities, as they are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, are small island jurisdictions, have both a single-pillar economy (tourism) and are affected by Hurricane Irma and Maria. These factors that both Saba and St. Maarten have in common can be considered as the controlled, independent variables. As explained before, the research focuses on a factor, namely sovereignty, which might contribute to a difference in responding to the generated waste after the hurricanes which can be called as the differentiating causes (Gerring, Cojocaru 2016).

The case-selection was chosen ex-post; ex post refers to a procedure in which the researcher knows the values of the case on relevant parameters prior to his/her selection of the case. Although, it might be seen as "cherry picking" (choosing cases that fit the researcher's theory or pre-conceptions), I value the selection of cases ex post. I have one specific reason to do so. The downside of doing research at a randomly selected location, which I did before, is that I felt not prepared at all. This was strengthened by the fact that I conducted research in a rural Indian area where I

was not familiar with the culture and had not enough background information available.

DATA COLLECTION

BEFORE FIELDWORK/ PREPARATION

My first step in orienting and getting knowledge for my research topic was reading literature and news articles. This is mainly done to discover what has been explored already, for example the influence of (non) sovereignty, culture, political structure and reforms, and history within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and what was going on in the region of interest. All this information was mainly found in (Western) academic literature. After diving into the concept of environment in the academic literature, I read novels, written by Caribbean authors, to understand how the environment and nature is perceived in the Caribbean context. I hope that, with this combination of (Western) academic literature and Caribbean novels, I have gained a basic understanding of the region. Besides that, I followed the interuniversity course *Introduction to Caribbean Studies* organized by KITLV. The course consisted of 26 lectures, including the following relevant topics: ecology, colonialism, plantations and slavery, cultural heritage, post-plantation economy, migration, socio-economic development, decolonization, local politics and international relations.⁸

I also like to draw attention to my internship that I did before I headed into the field. I did an internship at KITLV where I looked at the environmental policies within the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the Dutch Caribbean islands. I did research to find out if there existed well-defined environmental policies within the Kingdom and, more specifically, if these have been carried out. I set out the findings of this internship in another section on page 67. This research has been carried out by a desk research for three months which allowed me to really dive into the existing literature and policy reports.

DATA COLLECTION QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

To gather data for my qualitative research, I used both primary and secondary data. Broadly defined, primary data is newly collected data for the purpose of the research by the researcher itself, and secondary data is already collected and presented data

⁸ See also <https://www.kitlv.nl/student/>

by somebody else (Heaton 2008). In order to collect the secondary data, a desk research is conducted. The collection of primary data has been carried out through interviews and observations. Subsequently coding is carried out in order to be able to analyze the collected data. These three methods and the way they are applied in this research will be discussed in this section.

Secondary data

This kind of data, collected via a desk research, contributes to this research because policy-documents and legislations contain official information about the concepts and processes that are relevant for my research (Bryman 2016). Second, it is an appropriate method to search for data to contribute to contextual descriptions and the justification of the case-study. In this research, the used secondary data obtained by desk-research includes: academic literature, (policy) documents, reports, legislations, news articles and websites. I selected documents on the following criteria: content, domain, period, involved actors and medium.

Primary data

Fieldwork was conducted in June and July 2018. I first arrived at St. Maarten, stayed there for three weeks. Second, I went to Saba, which took me 15 minutes by plane. After spending three weeks there, I travelled back to St. Maarten before returning to the Netherlands.

The method of interviewing is used in order to gain deep insights about the process I analyzed. A completely open interview won't be guided at all, which is most suiting to an inductive research approach. Since some generalizability is necessary for developing conclusions within this research, I set out some questions to make sure that participants answer the same questions which will increase the reliability of my research. In order to do so, I chose for semi-structured interviews where there is space left to ask additional questions (Bryman 2016). This is useful because I also would like to be the research partly explorative and it is not known yet how the process actually plays out. An overview of the semi-structured interview can be found in the appendix.

The interviews lasted around an hour and, when allowed and suitable, are recorded. Interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview took place, preferably the same day or the next day. Moreover, I have written down reflective remarks during this research, so that I can determine how my own opinion and attitudes have changed throughout this research.

During my fieldwork, I kept a diary where I noted all my observations, pictures and other useful objects that I've gathered such as brochures, pamphlets etc. This is done because I see this as an added value to my research, trying to grasp the context, also when writing my findings back home.

OPERATIONALIZATION

To work with the concepts that are used in the theoretical model, I translated them into variables. In general, the concept of sovereignty as debated in my theoretical framework implies the transformation from Westphalian sovereignty, namely territorial integrity and political independence, to a form of Islandian sovereignty where self-determination without state sovereignty is present. Within this form of sovereignty, a degree of autonomy is acknowledged and seen as a head-versus-heart dilemma by different scholars. Environmental sovereignty is mostly described in terms of (inter)national laws and treaties. In the collected data, sovereignty was 'measured' by looking at decision making processes, who sets priorities and has a final legitimate say. Furthermore, I looked who drafted different laws, ordinances or policy reports and what the influence of these documents was on the ground. The concept of responsibility shows how, in terms of postcolonial responsibility, distance turns into difference. Second, the responsibility of the government, which can be taken in advance or afterwards, is influenced by the political situation, for example the smallness of the Dutch Caribbean islands. Besides that, responsibility can only be carried out when knowledge and resources are available. Within the law and policy documents the allocation of responsibilities will be coded as formal responsibilities, and within the transcripts, the perceptions and assumptions on the responsibilities and roles within the project will be coded as informal responsibilities. Furthermore, responsibility was measured by the concepts of funding, financial

capability, and who was involved in implementation and execution of different legislation.

PARTICIPANTS

The requirement of my participants was that they were dealing with environmental issues on the islands St. Maarten and Saba. Different stakeholders were asked, such as governmental authorities, NGOs and environmentalists. In order to gain insights on different perspectives and experiences, I asked participants from different departments within the government as well (Bryman 2016). An overview of all my respondents is set out below. The anonymity of the interviewees is guaranteed by means of a coding system used for referencing interviews in this article. Although the interviewees are categorized in governmental and non-governmental, some of them have or had multiple roles. In those cases, the most dominant category was chosen.

In order to find participants for the interviews, two complementary strategies for sampling are used: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is about strategically choosing participants that fit the unit of analysis and the objectives of the particular research (Bryman 2016). Before field work started, five interview appointments were already scheduled with selected stakeholders. Other interviewees resulted from a snowball sampling method influenced by the preselected interviewees. The strategy of snowball sampling was useful because of the smallness of the islands. Bryman (2016; p.424) explains that snowball sampling is a "...technique in which the researcher samples initially a small group of people, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research. These participants will then suggest others and so on".

Table 1: overview of participants on the islands (NG: NGO; G: Government, SXM: St. Maarten, SA: Saba)

<i>Participants St. Maarten</i>	<i>Function</i>
NG_1SXM	Employee Nature Foundation St Maarten
NG_2SXM	Employee SIMARC
NG_3SXM	Employee EPIC
NG_4SXM	Employee St. Maarten Pride Foundation
NG_5SXM	Freelance Writer & Environmental Educator
G_1SXM	Employee VROMI
G_2SXM	Employee VROMI
G_3SXM	Employee VROMI
G_4SXM	Employee VROMI
G_5SXM	Employee Ministry of Justice
G_6SXM	Employee Public Prosecution Service
G_7SXM	Employee Netherlands Representative Office
G_8SXM	Employee Social Economic Council

<i>Participants Saba</i>	<i>Function</i>
NG_1SA	Employee SCF
NG_2SA	Employee SCF
NG_3SA	Employee SABARC
NG_4SA	Employee Sea and Learn
G_1SA	Employee Planning Bureau
G_2SA	Employee Public Health
G_3SA	Employee Public works & Sanitation
G_4SA	Employee RCN
G_5SA	Employee Executive Council Member
G_6SA	Employee Executive Council Member
G_7SA	Employee Disaster Prevention

G_8SA	Senior Policy Advisor
G_9SA	Lawyer
G_10SA	Policy Advisor
G_11SA	Policy Advisor

DATA ANALYSIS

CODING

In order to be able to interpret the obtained data, the primary and secondary data was manually coded. The data is structured through labeling and coding with Atlas.ti. Several rounds of coding took place. For example, the coding based on the interview topic list, which is deductive. Furthermore, I coded two different phases, i.e., between 2010 and the hurricane season of 2017 and after the hurricane season of 2017. The third round of coding is derived inductively to criticize the existing academic field when needed. Afterwards, the information was also cross-referenced with policy documents, research, observations and news items.

LIMITATIONS AND CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

POST DISASTER RESEARCH

A quick analysis of academic peer-reviewed articles related to foregoing hazards (which have stimulated the highest academic attention over the past 15 years) available from Scopus shows that the number of publications peaked immediately or a year after these hazards (Gaillard, Gomez 2015). Of course, not all these quick post-disaster publications have required field work and immediate field studies, but many have. (Gaillard, Gomez 2015) argue that little reflection needs to be given to the implications and ethics of such practice.

The argument is based on different assumptions where I like to highlight one. Although most researchers try to limit the negative effects of their interactions with local communities, one cannot but wonder how the goodwill is perceived by the local communities, and on what historical layer these interactions come to rest. This observation becomes particularly valid when considering the majority of researchers' movements from center to periphery that is, from the wealthiest to the less affluent

countries, or from the most important urban centers to less significant towns and remote rural areas, mirroring colonial and postcolonial power relations amongst and within nations (Altbach 2003, Sidaway 1992). Despite the fact that formal colonies are a landscape that officially ended with the 20th century, cultural and social inequalities are still embedded within center-periphery interactions (Gaillard, Gomez 2015). This is also the case in the academic realm, where there are obvious unequal power relations between universities and researchers of the wealthiest nations and central cities and those of the once-colonized world, hence often from the less affluent countries, as well as those from peripheral towns (Altbach 2003, L. T. Smith 2013).

REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

I also like to draw attention to the complexity of constructing knowledge. This counts for the reviewed literature used within this study as well as the intersubjective relationship between researcher and researched. The knowledge on academic levels is still dominated by Western scholars and perceived as neutral and universal. Therefore, reading more fiction novels written by Caribbean people can be helpful as well to have a feeling how the environment and social processes are perceived within the region.

Furthermore, I want to pay attention to the interaction between the researcher and the researched. Qualitative methods for data-gathering such as participant observation and in-depth interviews are more easily tied up with the personality of the researcher. Participant observation is more researcher-dependent than an interview guided by a topic list, and this in turn is more researcher-dependent than a written questionnaire. In other words, doing qualitative research may be less standardized, less formalized and more easily linked to the personality of the researcher than working with numbers. The interpretation of data from my position as researcher may be biased. Reflexivity has been increasingly recognized as a crucial strategy in the process of generating knowledge by means of qualitative research. Reflexivity is viewed as the process of continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the positionality of the researcher as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Sultana 2007).

I should consider my own identity and contextually which may influence my analysis. Especially I, a Dutch woman, doing research in a former colony can influence answers of my interviewees as well as my interpretation. So, while doing this qualitative research, I will try to be aware of my positionality and abilities to reflect upon myself. I therefore kept the quote of (Berger 2015) 'you (are) shape (d) (by) others' in my mind while doing research. This impacts all phases of the research. Prior to my fieldwork my position influences my access to the field, during it influences my collection of data and observations, after it influences my data analyzing and conclusions I draw. The fact that I'm an outsider, not from the region and no close ties living on the islands, can be both positive as negative. People are maybe less willing to talk to me or are judged by my performance. On the other hand, I do not know much about their daily lives and operations so I really see them as the experts, which may gain their trust in telling me about their lives. Last but not least, the worldview and background affect the way in which I construct the world, use language, pose questions and choose the lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and making meaning of it and therefore may shape the findings and conclusions of the study.

4. CONTEXT

Where Ferdinand (2018) describes in his paper how the French national television channels only present the weather forecast of the European part of the French territory, this is the same for the Netherlands. Day in, day out, millions of Dutch citizens turn on their television to hear about the forthcoming weather. While doing so, the geographical image of the European Netherlands' territory is shown, together with the so called Wadden islands located above this territory. This image does not incorporate the Dutch Caribbean islands in the geographical representation of the Kingdom. Although three of the six Dutch Caribbean islands are autonomous, three other islands are even integrated in the Netherlands. These islands only appear in the news when the weather is expected to be extreme, as was the case during the hurricane season of 2017. Hazards, together with moments of social and political upheaval, mark the few occasions when these islands fleetingly appear in the national consciousness.

Within this section, I posit the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a multi-located political entity that cannot be reduced to one of its locations, and particularly not only to its European one. Such a move is needed because the six islands face a lot of impact due to weather circumstances. I first set out the historical overview of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, where I will trace back the history of the West India Company and some devastating hurricanes. Thereafter, I describe the decolonization policy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and its implications nowadays. After touching upon this aspect, I describe the two cases, Saba and St. Maarten that are debated within this study. I set out shortly the demographic situation, the physical setting, the political system as well as the juridical aspects of these two cases. To conclude this chapter, I shortly reflect upon my internship at KITLV to show how the status of the islands differs in terms of overseas governance.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

HURRICANES IN THE TIME OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY

The powerful Dutch West India Company was founded in 1621. Its commercial and military objectives were part of the struggle of the United Provinces of the Netherlands against the rule of Habsburg Spain (Schwartz 2015; p.45). In the 1630s, the Dutch settled the southern group of Curacao, Bonaire and Aruba off the coast of Venezuela. These islands proved to have little agricultural potential, but were well positioned for trade with the Spanish mainland. In addition, in the 1630s the Dutch also made settlements on St. Maarten, and on volcanic Saba and St. Eustatius, three small islands in the Leeward chain.

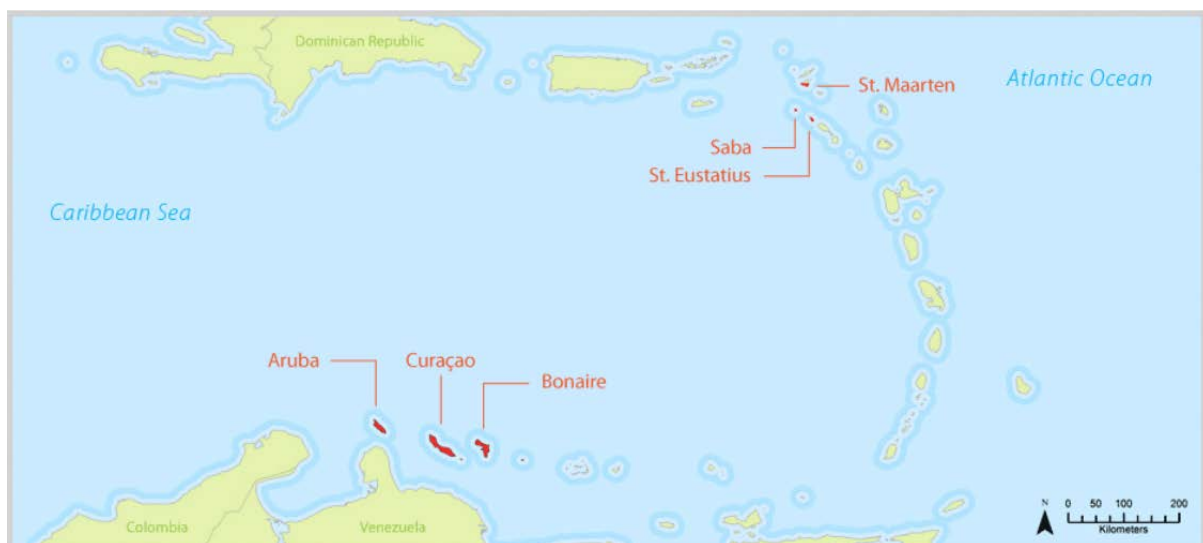


Figure 5. The six Dutch Caribbean islands. Source: DCNA.

In the development of these colonies, the Dutch West India Company played a central role, appointing the governors, supplying men and materials, and, when capital was short, sometimes delegating political power to individual merchants (ibid.). The colonies were more used for extractive industries like salt collection than to plantation agriculture, and employing extensive shipping capacity to supply provisions and slaves to other countries' colonies.

The mercantile of proprietary nature of the early settlements and their governance tended to weaken their sense of community, reciprocity, or noblesse oblige that might be set in motion by disasters or other dangers (Schwartz 2015; p.49). This is not to say that shared risks were not perceived, or that cooperative responses such as attacks against hostile enslaved people were impossible, for they certainly were, and sometimes were collaboratively mounted by settlers of different nationalities. Still, a sense of national concern and of state responsibility to the settlers in the face of a hazard was an attitude that slowly developed and only began to emerge in the eighteenth century (Schwartz 2015). For the most part, little attention was given by the national government to preventative actions before a hurricane's strike, and in the wake of a storm, residents mostly depended on help from neighbors or local authorities. This was in sharp contrast with Spain for example. The usual response in their colonies was an active intervention of the King. The hurricanes were seen as a risk of residence in the islands, and one in which the crown could and should act (Schwartz 2015; p.60).

In the eighteenth century, the Netherlands had developed one of the most advanced systems of charitable institutions and a network of civic welfare. For the aged, the infirm, and the poor there was an impressive array of institutions (Schwartz 2015). But in the case of a hazard in the West Indies, a similar concern by state authorities for the distressed was lacking. The West India Company seemed unable or unwilling to provide much help to the colonists unless such actions had direct benefits for the company (Schwartz 2015; p.61). There is no evidence of state attempts to provide disaster relief in this time period. In this case, there is a remarkable document from the planters on Saba. The island had, like its neighbors, suffered from a disastrous hurricane on August 31, 1772. One hundred and twenty-four of the residents, as well as the governor, council, church, state and burgers wrote an appeal to the Dutch West India Company, merchants and "other Christian Gentlemen and citizens of the city of Amsterdam" (Schwartz 2015; p.67). Their petition begged their distress having lost 140 of the 180 houses on the island, as well as their crops, furniture, clothing and wealth as well the leveling of their church. Since all the neighboring islands had also suffered from the storms and could provide no help, the petitioners turned to

you our European friends, who by your situation are happily exempted from these devastating judgements, humbly beseeching you to take our distressed ruined circumstances into mature consideration, and to do with all the convenient speed what Humanity and Christianity will dictate to you of our relief on so melancholy an occasion: not only in helping us to build a house for God's public worship, but for the relief of numbers of families among us which are reduced to begging and the most heart affecting wretchedness (Schwartz 2015; p.66).

Significantly, the appeal was not for aid from the West Indie Company or the government, but rather for charitable conditions to be deposited with Nicholas Doekscheer, a merchant of Amsterdam who, as agent for the island, would turn the funds over to the governor and council of the island (Schwartz 2015; p.67). The Dutch government was absent, the residents on their own. Another example from St. Maarten shows how citizens, not the local government, were held responsible. A hurricane on St Martin in 1792 had left much rubble in the streets, and the governor and council warned residents that if they did not remove it in the next ten days, the government would do so at their expense (ibid.).

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries voluntary charitable contributions and sometimes marginal donations from the crown remained the principal Dutch response to the distress of its West Indian islands. An 1819 hurricane that struck the Leeward Islands of St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius provides another informative example of the policy and its effects. The storm caused an almost complete loss of sugar revenues and thus income from export taxes (Schwartz 2015; p.68). It forced the government to lower administrative costs and rebuilding efforts so drastically that it took decades to recover. The colonies could do little for themselves. The annual subsidy from the Netherlands for St. Maarten of 31,000 florins amounted to only about two percent of the losses suffered on the island from the 1819 hurricane, which killed eighty people and destroyed or damaged almost every house on the island. The metropolis was unwilling, and the islands unable, to do much in the face of such calamities.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the Dutch tried a number of administrative reforms and eventually placed their West India colonies directly under the crown and created a colonial ministry in 1834, which was followed with the abolition of slavery in 1863 in all the Dutch colonies. The Dutch West Indie colonies had already diminished in importance as the Dutch East Indian colonies had become more profitable. The Dutch maintained a rigid policy that each colony should be self-supporting. Expenditure in relief of its populations was viewed as an added expense in an already losing proposition. This attitude has characterized Dutch policy since the beginning of the early modern area.

DECOLONIZATION PROCESS WITHIN THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

1945 -1954

World War II was a crucial period in the history of colonialism and decolonization worldwide. Under strong pressure from the Indonesian independence movement and an international opinion led by the United States, the Netherlands had to accept a redistribution of power. For a long time, the Dutch persisted in the hope that this would take place within the Kingdom, which appeared to be a costly illusion (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001).

The political structure of the transatlantic Kingdom, the 'Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands' had been designed during World War II with the specific purpose of winning over nationalist opposition in the major Dutch colony of Indonesia. The Charter enabled the formation of a supposedly permanent, 'post-colonial' alliance on voluntary basis, with the government seated in the Netherlands. It turned out that the Charter was agreed on between the European Netherlands and the former colonies in the West Indies and not with Indonesia. Due to this turnout, the Charter was the start of an often problematic trajectory of Dutch Caribbean decolonization (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001, De Jong, Van der Veer 2012, Veenendaal 2015). It took the Dutch a long time to accept the loss of their biggest colony, which they saw as indispensable to the Netherlands both economically and geopolitically (Oostindie. Klinkers 2012).

1954 - 2010

In 1954, the Netherlands changed its constitution to include Suriname and the six Caribbean islands, headed under the name of the Netherlands Antilles. Whereas the federal political union of these six islands enabled the Netherlands to deal with all of them at once through the Antilles' central administration in Willemstad, geographical, historical and cultural differences between the islands prevented the emergence of an Antillean nation or sense of common identity (Veenendaal 2015). Additionally, in contrast to the American and French approaches, Dutch decolonization policy in the Caribbean has for long been characterized by disengagement. From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, the Dutch government actively tried to bestow independence on its Caribbean colonies (Veenendaal 2015). By the mid-1970s, Suriname became independent, resulting in a dramatic exodus where one third of the population of this country migrated to the Netherlands, apparently having no confidence in the viability of the new state (Hoeft 1996).

Aruba obtained in 1986 a status of a separate, individual country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Aruba had the desire to get rid of the dominance of Curacao but did not want to leave the Kingdom *per se*. The five remaining islands of the Netherlands Antilles felt a decreasing enthusiasm for keeping the islands together as well. It took the Dutch a long time to accept that independence could not be imposed on the islands, and that the Antilles' centrifugal tendencies could not be held in check.

In the beginning of the 2000s referendums were held for the remaining five countries within the Netherlands Antilles. All the islands consistently refused to cut the umbilical cord that tied them to the former colonial power. St. Maarten and Curacao, the larger islands, gained the status of autonomous countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the same as Aruba. The three smaller islands of Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius, collectively known as the Caribbean Netherlands or the BES islands, became public entities (*openbare lichamen*), or so-called special municipalities, of the metropolitan Netherlands, and are in this sense constitutionally integrated within the Dutch legal and political system. The Netherlands has therefore become a trans-Atlantic country itself. The dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles on 10 October 2010 (commonly referred to as 10-10-10) has substantially reshaped the

structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (van der Pijl, Guadeloupe 2015), which brought challenges for the Charter, which was not designed for this kind of structure.

THE CHARTER FOR THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

As mentioned before, the political and constitutional relationship between the metropolitan Netherlands and the Caribbean overseas territories is regulated by the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (in Dutch: *Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*), which was ratified in 1954. A middle path had been chosen between the two extremes: full sovereignty for the former colonies or complete integration in the metropolis. As stated in the preamble of the Charter, the countries within the Kingdom will take care of their own interests autonomously, manage communal affairs on an equal footing, and accord each other assistance (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001).

The communal affairs are described in article 3 of the Charter which implies foreign affairs, defense, national identity and the guarantee of good governance and human rights (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001). The Charter also confirmed the principle of 'master in one's own house'. This means that all the islands are entitled to govern themselves and to maintain their own legislative and executive organs. Consequently, the countries of Aruba, Curacao, and St. Maarten are autonomous to a certain degree with their own parliaments, but are depending on the Netherlands for the mentioned communal kingdom affairs. In other words, these countries regulate the governance of their respective countries, but remain subordinate to the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba became public entities and are now constitutionally integrated into the (European) Netherlands. While most of the prerogatives and tasks of these entities are comparable to those of Dutch municipalities, the geographical, historical, cultural, and economic differences with regular Dutch municipality's means that some divergent rules and regulations have been applied (Veenendaal 2015). Since 2010, two authorities with different public tasks are active on the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands: the local island administration on the one hand, and the Dutch ministries, working together in a shared-service organization National Office for the

Caribbean Netherlands (in Dutch: *Rijksdienst Caribisch Nederland*, shortened as RCN) with headquarters on Bonaire, on the other hand.

AMBIGUITIES WITHIN THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom affairs are decided upon by the government of the Kingdom, consisting of the Dutch government supplemented by one minister plenipotentiary of each Dutch Caribbean island. There is no Kingdom parliament, and as such, the government of the Kingdom is dominated by the Dutch cabinet. Therefore, the Charter was, and is, not without its flaws since there is the fiction of political equality for the four different countries.

It is not always clear when the government acts exclusively in its capacity as the Dutch government, and when it does so in its role as the Kingdom government. De Jong (2009) argues that the prevalence of overlapping Dutch and Kingdom institutions causes ambiguity in the Caribbean countries who is in charge, the government of the Netherlands or the Kingdom government. For example, there is an unresolved tension between local autonomy and the obligation of the Kingdom to guarantee good governance (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001). The Charter of the Kingdom legally entrenches the autonomy of the six Dutch Caribbean islands, thus largely preventing Dutch political intervention. However, Article 43 of the Charter states that the safeguarding of human rights, the rule of law, and good governance is a responsibility of the Kingdom as a whole (Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 1954). Hillebrink (2008) points out that politician on both sides of the Atlantic have not consistently adopted either of these two contrasting perspectives, but have flexibly shifted between them, depending on the circumstances.

The reason that the Charter is still there is because of the fact that the Charter is decided on the conditions that the countries are politically equivalent which means that the provisions of the Charter can only be modified when all partners agree with the proposed changes. In other words, the Charter, and international legal regulations, entail that the Caribbean countries are powerful veto-players that have the capacity to block political-institutional choices and alternatives (Veenendaal

2016). All the six islands have consistently voted for an extension of the linkage embodied in the trans-Atlantic Kingdom.

There is a long tradition in Dutch Caribbean literature that offers explanations for this non-sovereignty in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Mulder 2018; p.13). The overall findings show that the choice of the different Dutch Caribbean islands to be not fully sovereign is a pragmatic one where nationalist ideology loses from several benefits. Over the past decades overwhelming majorities of citizens of the Dutch Caribbean islands feel that the Kingdom guarantees democracy, human rights and liberties, and territorial integrity; provides development funds and makes the islands a more trustworthy for foreign investments; and appreciate that Dutch citizenship implies the right of abode in the Netherlands and in the European Union at large, encompassing access to high-quality education, a large labor market, as well as the extensive medical and welfare provisions of the metropolis (Oostindie, Klinkers 2001). The Dutch Caribbean islands increasingly experience a head-versus-heart dilemma (Veenendaal, Oostindie 2017).

KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The Charter emphasizes the common goals and values of the Kingdom, and its existence as a single entity under international law. When looking at international treaties, only the signature of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is valid. The Kingdom is the only sovereign state and therefore the only legal actor to negotiate and conclude international treaties and agreements. However, the geographical applicability of these agreements can be limited to Aruba, Curacao, St. Maarten, the European part of the Netherlands and / or the Caribbean Netherlands. Once the parties agreed on signing the treaty, implementation and compliance with treaties is an autonomous responsibility of the individual autonomous countries. However, the Kingdom of the Netherlands remains ultimately responsible under international law as the contracting party both for the autonomous countries as well as for the BES islands.

The Netherlands is a European Union Member State. The treaties of the European Union have been signed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. These have only been

ratified for the European part of the Kingdom. The Caribbean parts of the Kingdom have the status of Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). This applies to the autonomous countries Aruba, Curacao and St. Maarten, as well as the special municipalities Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. The OCT status gives the autonomous countries and special municipalities a number of advantages, for example with regard to export and import policy to and from the EU. In addition, they can receive funding from various EU funds, for example the European Development Fund (EDF). The Dutch Caribbean islands represent their interests through the Overseas Association of Overseas Countries of the European Union (OCTA). Since citizenship is a kingdom affair, and is thus not distinguished for the four countries, citizens from all six Dutch Caribbean islands are also citizens of the EU.

ST. MAARTEN; THE FRIENDLY ISLAND

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

St. Maarten is the biggest of the three Leeward Islands that were part of the Netherlands Antilles. At the same time, Saint Martin/ St. Maarten is the smallest island in the world shared by two sovereign governments; the Dutch and the French. Since 1648 the 87-square-kilometre (34 sq. mi) island is divided roughly 60/40 between the French Republic (53 km², 20 sq. mi) and the Kingdom of the Netherlands (34 km², 13 sq. mi). Although a bit smaller, the Dutch side is more heavily populated, with a population of approximately 40.000. Founded in 1763, Philipsburg, the capital of Dutch St. Maarten, fills a narrow stretch of land. With its numerous shops, restaurants, cafes and casinos the waterfront forms the focal point of tourist activities and has become a popular stop for cruise ships.

The Dutch began to use the island for its ponds for salt in the 1630's. With few people inhabiting the island, the Dutch easily founded a settlement there in 1631, building Fort Amsterdam as protection from invaders. Soon thereafter the Dutch West India Company began their salt mining operations. Later, in the eighteenth century, with the cultivation of cotton, tobacco and sugar, mass numbers of African enslaved people were imported to work on the plantations. In 1848, the French abolished slavery in their colonies including the French side of St. Maarten. The enslaved people on the Dutch side of the island protested and threatened to flee to

the French side to seek asylum. Exposed to cruel treatment, the enslaved people organized rebellions, and their overwhelming numbers made them impossible to ignore. The local Dutch authorities gave up and emancipated the enslaved people. While this was respected locally, it was not until 1863 when the Dutch abolished slavery in all of their island colonies and that the enslaved people became legally free.

The population boomed from 1960 when it was 2,728 to nearly 40,000 in 2013. Increasing migration has not only resulted in strong population growth in recent decades, but has also created a very heterogeneous society; at present, close to 70 per cent of the population of St. Maarten was not born on the island (Roitman, Veenendaal 2016). Today, the range of influences is reflected in the number of languages spoken. Both Dutch and English are the official language, but English is taught in schools and spoken everywhere. Other common languages are Spanish and Papiamentu, the dialect of the Netherlands Antilles.

Compared to other countries in the region, St. Maarten has a relatively high standard of living, with an income per capita of USD 23,292 in 2013. The island's official currency is the Antillean guilder, but the American dollar is extensively used. Around 80% of St. Maarten's economy consists of tourism, with a focus on day visitors brought in by cruise ships. Besides that, the numbers of tourists grew along with developments in air transport.

The climate of St. Maarten is humid tropical with very little variation in temperature over the year. St. Maarten is located in the Atlantic hurricane zone. The island has an irregular shape, having many bays and lagoons and sandy beaches along its coast. Coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove and salt pond habitats are apparent around the coastline of St. Maarten. The types of vegetation that characterize St. Maarten have evolved due to the island's terrain, distinct climate and years of human activity. Old plantations removed the natural habitat and today, the high population density and expanding tourism industry of St. Maarten continues to threaten terrestrial environments. As a consequence, St. Maarten's vegetation is almost entirely secondary or degraded.

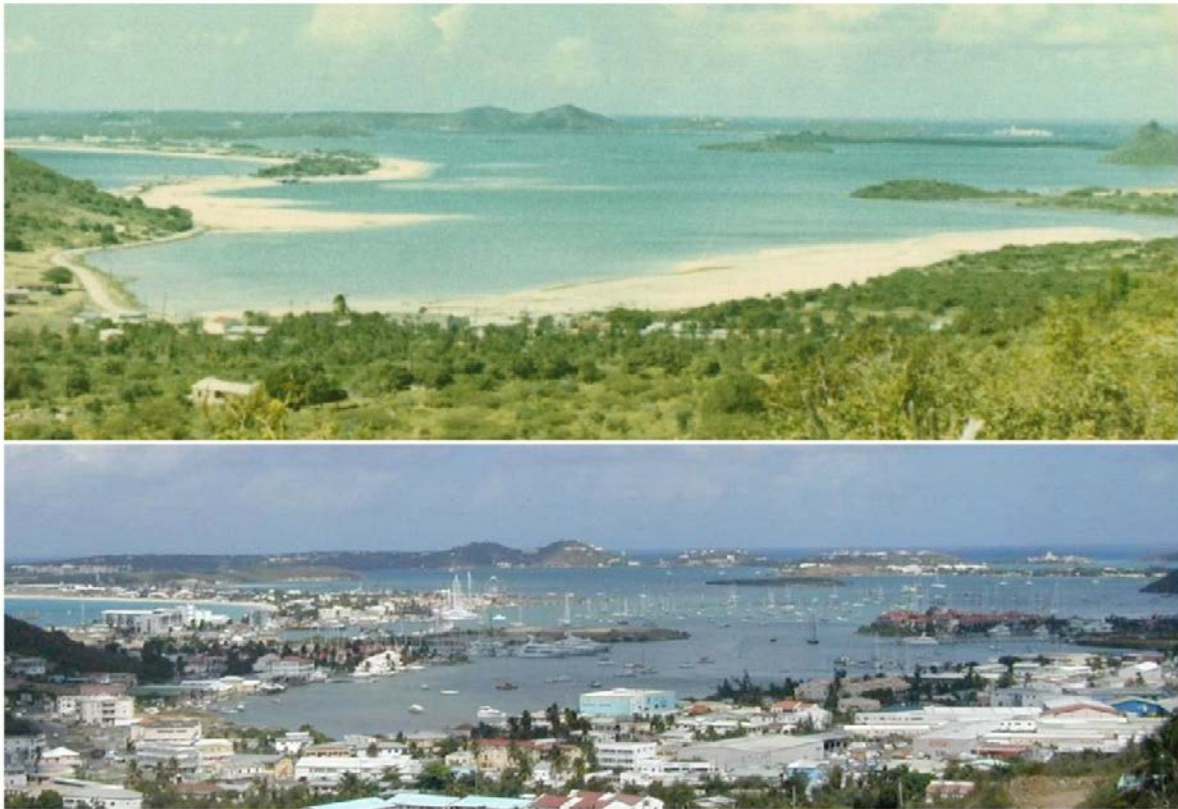


Figure 6. The development of Simpson Bay Lagoon on St. Maarten from the 1970s into the 21st century has marginalized the natural environment. Source: A. Caballero.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

As mentioned before, St. Maarten is since 10-10-10 an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This means that St. Maarten has, since then, its own government and parliament. Together, these institutions are empowered to enact legislation in regard to the countries' own affairs. The government of St. Maarten is represented by the governor. The prime minister presides the council of ministers. The executive power is exercised by the government. The legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. The minister plenipotentiary is not part of the government and represents the St. Maarten government in the Netherlands. The country is a parliamentary representative democratic country with a multi-party system. The current cabinet is the second Marlin-Romeo cabinet formed on June 25, 2018. It is the eighth since St. Maarten became a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2010.

The smallness of St. Maarten has contributed to the political domination by a handful of individuals on this island nation (Roitman, Veenendaal 2016). The small demographic scale of St. Maarten has led almost inevitably to a limited pool of qualified people to fill crucial positions on the island. This small group of people with the skills, training, education, or status to take on certain jobs or positions is in a prime position to be gatekeepers. As Roitman and Veenendaal (2016) describe in their article, this leads to an almost oligarchic political system on the island.

Since 10-10-10, the Dutch government has to some extent acquired an amplified supervisory role regarding financial policies. Conflicts between the Dutch government and the government of St. Maarten about their supposedly unbalanced budgets and a lack of good governance have increased the resistance toward perceived Dutch interference (Veenendaal 2016).

SABA; THE UNSPOILED QUEEN

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The mountainous Dutch Caribbean island of Saba is five square miles and consists largely of the potentially active volcano Mount Scenery, with 887 meters (2,910 ft.) the highest point of the entire Kingdom of the Netherlands. The population of Saba (Sabans) consists around 2000 people. Saba's small size has led to a fairly small number of island families, who can trace their last names back to around a half-dozen families. Most families are an intermixing of Africans, Dutch, English and Scottish as well as Irish. In recent years Saba has become home to a large group of expatriates, and around 250 immigrants who are either students or teachers at the Saba University School of Medicine. Both English and Dutch languages are official. Despite the island's Dutch affiliation, English is the principal language spoken on the island and has been used in its school system since the 19th century.

In 1640, the Dutch West India Company, which had already settled on the neighboring island of St. Eustatius (known then as "The Golden Rock" as it was a thriving regional center of commerce) brought people over to Saba in order to colonize the island. For almost 200 years the island switched hands between The

Dutch, Spanish, French and English. The Dutch won out in 1816 and enslaved people were imported to work on Saba. When the Dutch took over, the village of "The Bottom" was established as the administrative center and capital of the island, which is still the case nowadays.

Saba's houses have a cottage look with red roofs. Sabans are proud of their history of environmental conservation, calling Saba "The Unspoiled Queen". Saba National Park is a national park located on the north coast of Saba. The property was officially turned over to the NGO Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF) in 1999. It stretches from the coastline all the way up to the cloud forest, and encompasses all vegetation zones present on Saba. The coastline of Saba is mostly rubble and rocky cliffs that are 100 meters (330 ft.) or taller with no permanent beaches.

The tourism industry contributes more to the island's economy than any other sector. There are about 25,000 visitors each year. Saba has a number of inns, hotels, rental cottages and restaurants. Saba is especially known for its ecotourism, having exceptional scuba diving, climbing and hiking.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Since October 10, 2010, Saba is integrated in the Netherlands. This means that Sabans vote for Dutch Parliament, the Second Chamber and are under direct Dutch-metropolitan control. The island is free from the dependency of the administration of the Netherlands Antilles and has received strong Dutch political interference and presence, but also financial and economic support, in return. Dutch legal and administrative regulations are now gradually introduced and implemented on the island.

The legislative entity of the Public Entity Saba is called the Island Council. The Island Council consists of five members and elections take place every four years. The Island Council appoints and supervises the Commissioners in the Executive Council. The Executive Council is responsible for the execution of policies and legislation. Saba has a dualistic governing system, which means that the Commissioners are not part of the Island Council.

In contrast to regular Dutch municipalities, which are part of a province, political power on Saba is shared between the locally elected island council and executive council, headed by a Major (*Gezaghebber*) appointed by the Dutch Crown, and the central Dutch government, which is represented on the islands by RCN, headed by a Lieutenant-Governor (*Rijkvertegenwoordiger*) for the three islands of the Caribbean Netherlands together. As a result, local government on the island involves both domestic and metropolitan institutions and actors, but the inherent inequalities in political power, financial capacities, and administrative resources entail that the relations between these institutions are characterized by huge asymmetries. It should be noted, that the budget for running the island government is set and strictly supervised by the central government. Money for local initiatives in policymaking is project-based and is acquired by appealing to separate and 'special' funds.

Under the new rules, the Dutch government can decide which Dutch laws should be implemented on the islands and which ones not. Since 10-10-10, much has been invested in education and health care, and the quality has risen considerably. On the other hand, the U.S. dollar was introduced as the currency, replacing the Antillean Guilder, which has made the products available on the island expensive for locals. The population of the islands appears to perceive that whereas laws on moral issues such as gay marriage and abortion had to be rapidly effected, there is no corresponding rush on the part of The Hague to apply regulations relating to social welfare benefits and salaries (Oostindie & Klinkers, 2012, p. 264). The balance between the disadvantages of reduced autonomy and the advantages inherent in the metropolitan link strongly influences the status debate in most sub-national island jurisdictions, and Saba is certainly no exception in this regard (Mulder, 2018).

TERMINOLOGY

The different status of the Dutch Caribbean islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands leads to a rethinking of the used terms of governmental terminology within this study and broader academic field. The Kingdom government consists mainly of the Dutch government as explained above. Since St. Maarten is an

autonomous country within this Kingdom, they have their own government, apart from the Dutch government. However, Saba as a special municipality, is integrated within the Netherlands and therefore the Dutch government regulates directly the island or via RCN. When I was on Saba, the division of the government of Saba and the Dutch government was not received well as it implies that the governments are on an equal footing or do not belong to each other. The people I spoke to preferred talking about the national government or European Netherlands government, referring to the government seated in the European Netherlands, or the local government, referring to the government seated on Saba. Second, they also used the term *Holland* or *The Hague* as the political governing center of the European Netherlands. I choose to use the term European Netherlands or national government in the analysis of my research in relation to Saba when referring to the government seated in The Hague. However, in my quotes I do not replace the term Holland or The Hague when respondents used these terms to refer to the European Netherlands. I use the term Dutch government in relation to St. Maarten since the government of St. Maarten is not directly linked to the Dutch government, but only to the Kingdom government.

Second, the Caribbean Netherlands stands for the islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, not to be confused with the Dutch Caribbean islands within the Kingdom of the Netherlands which also relates to Aruba, St. Maarten and Curacao. The Caribbean Netherlands is also called the BES islands, or special municipalities or public entities of the Netherlands. In this document, the Caribbean Netherlands is used as an indication of the BES islands because of their direct relationship with the Netherlands that is expressed in this way of phrasing. However, because of the framing of the three islands as BES in different laws or policy documents, I use the term BES islands when suitable. The term special municipality is used to describe the relationship with Saba and the European Netherlands since the status of being a special municipality influences the sovereignty and responsibility of both the national and local government. Public entity or local government is used if I specifically relate to the Saban government, a term that the inhabitants of the islands also often use for the local government.

EVALUATION OF KITLV INTERNSHIP

Preliminary to my fieldwork, I did an internship for three months at KITLV. During this internship I analyzed different documents, such as policies, laws, debates, treaties and so on with regard to environmental issues, to figure out if there are well defined and widely supported environmental regulations within the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the Dutch Caribbean islands.⁹ The assumption was that this would not be the case since regulating and taking care of the environment is namely an autonomous affair, based on the agreements made in the Charter. Environmental policy is not an autonomous affair for the Caribbean Netherlands anymore since 2010, but still is for Aruba, St. Maarten and Curacao. However, with the changing climate, it is worth to revise if this is still desirable. The time frame the research spanned was from 1990 till 2018, whereby a distinction was made from 2010 onwards between Dutch policy for the BES islands and possibly wider Kingdom policy with regard to the autonomous countries of the Kingdom. In this section I set out the findings and conclusions that came forth from this study.

FINDINGS OF PRE-FIELDWORK RESEARCH

An observation that quickly emerged from the research and analysis is that it was not always clear within the various policy reports and legislations who has or should take responsibility. Responsibility is sometimes described but often remains open to own interpretation. Within the analysis, it was more useful to notice who the owner is (which government, ministry or actor) of the written piece, and thus assumes a degree of accountability, than where literally is stated who is responsible. In addition, environmental problems are complex and not bound to borders. This means that responsibility on a local or national scale can depend on the responsibility that is

⁹ Overview of websites that are used

From 1990 to 1995 <http://www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl/>

From 1994 to now <https://www.officielebekendmakingen.nl/>

From 2004 to now <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/>

From 2008 to <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/>

For Sint Maarten: <http://www.sintmaartengov.org/Pages/default.aspx>

For Aruba: <http://www.overheid.aw/>

For Curaçao: <http://www.gobiernu.cw/nl/>

For Bonaire: <http://www.bonairegov.an/>

For Saba: <https://www.sabagov.com/temp/>

For Sint Eustatius: <http://www.statiagovernment.com/>

For NGOs: <http://www.dcnanature.org/resources/policy-law-enforcement/>

taken on an international scale. That is why it was important to identify the scale and for which scale policy documents have been written and what this says about the extent of responsibility. How and whether responsibility is taken was found in evaluation reports or in budgets.

Although environmental policy is an autonomous affair, the Kingdom has the authority to sign international treaties, which may be in force for both the Netherlands and the Dutch Caribbean Islands. These international treaties therefore also touch upon environmental affairs. This does not immediately mean that the Dutch government takes responsibility for the obligations arising from international treaties. The Dutch government emphasizes that this is an autonomous matter. Given that the Dutch Caribbean islands do not have sufficient resources and are not eligible for support from international funds, with the exception of EU-funds, responsibility shifts to the Kingdom to a significant degree. This responsibility is sometimes taken. The Dutch government is willing to make financial resources and expertise available. Since the environment is so closely linked to the economy on the islands, the Dutch government has fear of a weakening economy and therefore migration to the Netherlands. Before providing financial resources, it is expected from the islands that they identify where they need help with. So therefore, it is the responsibility of the islands to report on environmental issues. Furthermore, the aid that is given is project based which implicates a lack of a long-term vision and no sustainable funding.

From 1990 onwards, there have been environmental policies developed by the Netherlands with regard to the Dutch Caribbean islands as well as by the islands themselves. During this time, the five Dutch Caribbean islands were bound by one political union, the Netherlands Antilles. In 1951 it was established for the islands within the Netherlands Antilles that environmental and nature conservation, as far as arising from international treaties do not belong to the responsibility of an island territory. However, the management of the environment that is not established in international legislation is an island affair, such as waste management. Furthermore, a development has taken place on the Dutch Caribbean islands with the introduction of national parks, both in the terrestrial and marine areas. This does not mean that

protecting the nature and environment is made effective, due to a lack of control and implementation of legislation.

In the run up to the constitutional changes within the Kingdom, so before 10-10-10, different research has been carried out, commissioned by various Dutch ministries. Now that the Netherlands becomes direct responsible for the Caribbean Netherlands, they want to have visible what the status of the nature and environment is. The results of these reports are not positive, although there is recognized that the basis for environmental regulations is there. The execution and implementations of these regulations are not working effectively, with the exception of the work of the NGOs who take an active role in taking care of the environment. Environmental policy is not an autonomous affair for the Caribbean Netherlands anymore, but still is for Aruba, St. Maarten and Curacao. However, marginal notes can be made. First, the cooperation between the autonomous countries within the Kingdom is influenced by the increasing presence of the Dutch government in the Caribbean. Examples are the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that has been implemented and a database that records biodiversity of all the Dutch Caribbean islands. Secondly, Dutch ministries have the final responsibility for the obligations arising from international treaties relating to nature and the environment for the Caribbean Netherlands. However, the implementation of this remains an island affair.

Different conclusions come forth why a widely supported and well-defined policy is not effective within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The first conclusion relates to the vision of the various governments. There is an insufficient sense of urgency to take care of the environment on the islands, although the environment is strongly related to the economic development because of tourism, the single-pillar based economy of many Caribbean islands. Besides that, the political instability on the islands does not contribute in making environmental issues a priority. An improvement in the environment asks for a long breath, which is hard to achieve when the political system is instable and the economic situation not fully developed yet. As a result, mainly short-sighted projects are carried out, which are strengthened by the way the Dutch government only provides funding for projects. Although programs and policies are developed for a couple of years, due to the lack of

(financial) resources on the islands, there is no following implementation, despite the urgent situation.

Another remarkable finding was the importance of NGOs in executing environmental care on the islands. This is mentioned in official policy documents from both the Dutch Ministries as well as by the government of the islands. It is striking that there is suspicion from the Dutch government about the correct execution of environmental projects done by the local government. The Dutch government states that the NGOs are there to keep the authorities accountable. Six NGOs are working together in one organization, the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA).¹⁰ NGOs actively manage nature and the environment on the Dutch Caribbean islands but in doing so are depending on (international) funds and financial support from the government.

To conclude, the lack of implementation and control can partly be explained by the remarkable and unique structure of the Kingdom. Although the new structure of the Kingdom offers the opportunity to act harder in the Caribbean Netherlands in the field of environment and nature, the tensions between the various governments seem to take the upper hand. Second, the unequal economic development between the European Netherlands and the six Dutch Caribbean islands, strengthened with the insular characteristics of these islands occurs different conceptions of the importance of taking care of nature and environment. It seems as if the Kingdom is in a paradoxical situation where, on the one hand, the Charter could ensure equality and equal rights, and on the other hand problems are easily dismissed as an autonomous matter.

NUSTAR ON ST. EUSTATIUS

An article by Bets et al (2016) shows how responsibility for NuStar, an American Oil Terminal located on St. Eustatius is regulated before and after 10-10-10, as well as how this responsibility is taken differently and how this is influenced by the degree of sovereignty. The article shows perfectly the interactions within the Kingdom of the

¹⁰ The following NGOs that are part of DCNA: Parke Nacional Arikok, STINAPA Bonaire, CARMABI, Saba Conservation Foundation, STENAPA St Eustatius, St Maarten Nature Foundation.

Netherlands with regard to environmental governance that I explored during my internship.

A small island as St. Eustatius, called Statia by its local inhabitants, is heavily depending on the multinational company due to income and employment (p. 59). This is strengthened by the limited governance capacity on a small island such as St. Eustatius because of a lack of human, financial, and informational resources (Agueda Corneloup and Mol 2014). Before 10-10-10, St. Eustatius was part of the Netherlands Antilles. The island government did not receive much support from the Netherlands Antilles government regarding the governance of the oil terminal (Bets et al, p. 63). The absence of a governmental influence led to a failed environmental management which meant that NuStar had operated without an environmental permit since 2002 (Bestuurscollege Sint Eustatius 2013). This was discovered when St. Eustatius became a special municipality of the Netherlands and the unequal power balance between St. Eustatius and the oil terminal was challenged.

The Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (I&M) became more involved in the environmental management of NuStar. At this time, the island government and the Ministry of I&M were responsible, respectively, for environmental permits. Not much later, in 2011, NuStar announced the need for a second oil terminal. The island government decided to collaborate with NuStar and therefore prioritized oil over tourism, which was in conflict with the St. Eustatius' strategic development plan (Van der Velde et al. 2010).

Next to that, the Ministry of I&M was willing to delay the implementation of certain deadlines in a new environmental permit with regard to NuStar outdated operations that did not require Dutch and European Union standards. The NGO Statia Safe & Sound (SS&S) firmly opposed this reaction of the ministry and argued that NuStar had self-inflicted this situation by operating outside of governmental control for over ten years. To strengthen their reasoning, they relied on terminals in the European Netherlands which were closed, also due to the missing and permissive supervision of the ministry (Bets et al 2016). In April 2015, the inspections and recent incidents urged the ministry, instead of the island government, to become entirely responsible for permitting, supervising and enforcing environmental regulations regarding the oil

terminal. This transformed the power dynamics significantly as well as the responsibilities related to environmental management.

Due to the transferred responsibility of the oil terminal to the Ministry of I&M, NuStar tax revenues were no longer collected by the island government but by the Netherlands (Bets et al 2016; p. 66). This reallocation of resources made the island government look for alternative ways to bring much needed revenue to the island. Consequently, a new Harbor Ordinance was drafted as an attempt by the island government to regain structural power. The new harbor ordinance resulted not only in an increase in harbor fees but also in a designated harbor zone (Bets et al 2016; p.66). The island government was accused of non-compliance with requirements of proper governance because the marine park was reduced enormously. St. Eustatius National Marine Park has been protected under the international Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) protocol since December 2014 (Koelega 2015). Although the island government is responsible for the marine park, which has been executed by NGO STENAPA, St. Eustatius' status as special municipality within the Netherlands requires the Ministry of I&M to oversee whether the island obeys Dutch legislation and international agreements regarding nature conservation.

Due to some other circumstances, the European Netherlands government decided to put St. Eustatius under enhanced surveillance by the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Spies et al. 2015). The structural power of the Netherlands over St. Eustatius therefore increased even more, beyond the responsibilities of the Ministry of I&M.

The story of Bets et al (2016) shows how responsibility before and after 10-10-10 is regulated and taken differently and how this is influenced by the degree of sovereignty. The island government of St. Eustatius has the responsibility to take care of the environment. When they were part of the Netherlands Antilles, they did not receive any support from that government or the Dutch government with regard to NuStar. After 10-10-10, the Dutch Ministry of I&M became involved which made that there was more control on the activities of NuStar. The Ministry of I&M was not satisfied how the island government was dealing with the problems around NuStar and took more responsibility under the heading of lack of good governance. This performance of the Dutch ministry was not received in a good way which created

tensions between the European Netherlands government and the government of St. Eustatius. Furthermore, the example of the Ngo SS&S shows how they used the metaphor of distance into difference to make their argument against the government of the European Netherlands noncompliance with the official regulations in the European Netherlands, where St. Eustatius is part of. Last but not least, the story shows how the ratification of international treaties, signed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, influences the different activities that are allowed and responsibilities that need to be taken by the island government.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

Most of the Caribbean islands struggle with the amount of waste that they produce or import on the island, as described in the theoretical framework. During my analysis, I look how the practice of sovereignty and responsibility is evolving with regard to waste governance on both St. Maarten and Saba before and after the hurricane season of 2017. In doing so, I outline the two cases apart from each other, starting with Saba. I first describe the practice of governance before the hurricane season of 2017. Second, I tell the story of hurricane Irma and Maria. Third, I explore how this influences the practice of sovereignty and responsibility within the Kingdom of the Netherlands from the perspective of different stakeholders located on St. Maarten and Saba. When the interview was held in Dutch, I translated the quotes to English. When the interview was conducted in English and my respondents particularly alternated between English and Dutch, I saw this is an added value and used the Dutch version of that phrase or word.

SABA

LESS FOR LESS, MORE FOR MORE

The people that I spoke to noticed a lot of differences before and after 10-10-10. Before 10-10-10, the government of the Netherlands Antilles did not pay a lot of attention to this small rock (NG_1SA; G_9SA)¹¹. This resulted for example, in a permanent shortage of the budgets (G_5SA) and the lack of implementation of different international treaties (NG_1SA). After 10-10-10, Saba became a special municipality of the Netherlands which had consequences for the practice of responsibility because of the involvement of different Dutch Ministries. The Ministry of I&M¹² became responsible for the infrastructure and environment on Saba. Since 10-10-10, the Dutch ministries slowly implement laws and policies on the BES islands. As a result, some laws were framed for the BES islands where, with regard to waste, the following are relevant: Law of Maritime Management BES (*Wet Maritiem Beheer BES*) and Law of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment

¹¹ The coding of respondents is as follow: G: Government, NG: NGO, SA: Saba and SXM: St. Maarten. See also page 48.

¹² This ministry existed from 2010-2017. Afterwards, it was replaced by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water management (I&W)

BES (*Wet Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer BES*), shortened as VROM BES.

The first one mainly focuses on the prevention of marine pollution. The latter one is focusing on the management of accumulated waste on the island itself. The minimum requirement for the environment according to the VROM BES is in any case the making of national and island environmental policy with general rules for establishments and environmental permits for waste disposal sites. The minimum requirements for waste in the VROM BES law concern: having a regular collection system for regular waste, having a regime for the collection of hazardous substances, but also car tires, oil, car wrecks, household waste, etc., combating litter, preventing leaching of waste from landfills in the sea and improvement of the landfill policy. The landfill of Saba is located at the end of the road in Fort Bay, where the only human settlements along the coast are a dock, several buildings, a rock quarry, and thus at the end the landfill, see also image 7. Saba collects the waste daily and deposits it unsorted on the landfill where the waste is burned every week (IdeeVersa 2015). When the waste is burned at this location, it affects especially the people of the village St. John's located above the landfill because of emissions from waste burning.



Figure 7. The landfill of Saba located at the end of Fort Bay. Up in the hills, lies the village of St. Johns. The schools of Saba are located in this village. Picture is made by the author.



Figure 8. A closer look of the landfill. In front the open-air burner. Behind the landfill. Picture is made by the author.

Having a second look at the VROM BES, it reveals that some of the clauses are not in working or designed by the end of 2011. On many points, the law is not elaborated and implemented, which on the one hand provides freedom, but on the other hand it also ensures that Saba does not have any responsibility and the Netherlands does not as well (G_9SA; G_11SA). Up to and including 2013 there have been no concrete developments of the implementation. Furthermore, although the Ministry of I&M bears the responsibility of the environment for the BES islands now, the VROM BES, which has been approved and legislate by the States General of the Netherlands, shifts a lot of responsibilities to the local government on Saba. In addition, the new created 'BES legislations' are not aligned with local ordinances that already existed on the island (G_9SA).

Besides conflicting local ordinances and the new create BES laws, the respondents were mentioning 'all these rules from Holland' that do not make sense on the island or are not needed since the population on the island is so small (G_9SA; G_10SA). The new constitutional order has created a 'transatlantic bureaucracy' (Mulder 2018 p.19). Within this formed bureaucracy, Sabans have the feeling that a lot of research

needs to be done by the European Netherlands government before really investing money.

You know the Dutch mentality is a penny saved, a penny earned. And yeah, if that is their attitude towards the islands... Saba has the feeling that money is not always spend the right way. You know lots of money is wasted on study after study. And every study comes back with; there is poverty on the island. You know a lot of programs that do not make sense at all here on the island. If the money spend on these projects would be done differently, you could spend money on the poverty issues here on the island (G_5SA).

The local government is strongly depending on the available funds from the European Netherlands government, both on issues that need to be arranged on a national level as well as on issues they can tackle on a local level. Every year Saba receives an annual budget from the national government. This budget is based on the responsibilities the local government officially has and is strictly supervised by the government of the European Netherlands. The minimum threshold to implement these responsibilities is used in setting the budget (G_10SA). Officially, the local government has the freedom to set priorities where the money is spent on (G_5SA). Though, this budget is used to pay salaries and the operations on the island (G_10SA), and it should be noted that, after all the yearly costs, not much money is left (G_5SA; G_8SA). Because of the political and financial structure before 10-10-10, some overdue maintenance on, for example infrastructure or buildings, is still present on the island.

The national government recognizes these problems and hands out some special distributions (*bijzondere uitkeringen*). These funds are labelled and can only be used for projects that are in line with the purpose of these funds. The national government makes these funds available where the government of Saba, as well as the government of St. Eustatius and Bonaire, can hand in projects (G_10SA). In 2014, the Ministry of I&M provided a fund for a more proper collection of waste. On Saba, the costs for waste collection were substantially higher than the minimum threshold, because Saba collects the waste on a daily basis. The starting point of this project set up in 2014 was that two types of waste are collected (wet and dry fraction) and

then sorted and recycled as much as possible, the rest of the waste is incinerated in a special burner. This investment was made at the request of Saba, who has raised the issue of waste as an environmental problem and as a priority.

The special distributions that are made available by the national government actually mean that this government set the priorities where money is spent on. Although the public entity of Saba needs to hand in projects they want to work on, it needs to be in line with the available fund. Second, this incidental money is project based. This leads to implementation of projects but is hard to sustain when there is no, in terms of money, a follow up available. For example, the recycle program, introduced in 2015. In 2015, Saba signed the “Green Deal, better waste management Caribbean Netherlands” in The Hague (OCTA, 2015). The Green Deal is a cooperation format of the local government, the national government and a number of Dutch environmental organizations specialized in waste management and recycling.¹³

Yes, we recycle waste and we have different bins, the orange ones and the grey ones. But when you look inside of them, there is no difference at all. There is no difference in what lies in the bins. When you want to properly manage the waste, you need to be consistent. Not to introduce it simply and let go after that. Such an introduction of a different waste management needs time and supervision. It needs enforcement (NG_1SA).

What happened with recycling on Saba is that these different bins were introduced. However, there was only one garbage pickup truck available. So, all the waste was mixed again. When the citizens of Saba saw that, they stopped recycling at their home since they felt that they recycled for nothing (G_11SA). Introducing different trash bins and encourage recycling is not enough when no resources are available in the steps afterwards. Saba was the only island that signed the Green Deal accord. The other two islands of the Caribbean Netherlands did not participate.

The approach of the BES islands by the national government, implicating the three islands can be seen as one unit, is problematic according to the people I spoke to

¹³ See also: <https://www.greendeals.nl/green-deals/afvalreductie-en-recycling-op-treinstations-en-treinen>

(G_5SA; G_6SA; G_7_SA; G_9SA; G_10SA). In their stories about the European Netherlands government and its agents, Sabans do not describe themselves as victims nor do they call upon anti colonial rhetoric, as is sometimes described in the dominant academic approach (Mulder, 2018). Although they acknowledge sometimes that Saba is seen in the European Netherlands as a '*rots met 2000 inwoners*' (*rock with 2000 inhabitants*) (G_9SA) and being a special municipality of the Netherlands makes that when it is convenient they are perceived as Dutch (G_5SA). In approaching sovereignty on Saba, Sabans tell their stories in an attempt to not be seen as part of the BES islands but as a unique island with a good relationship with the European Netherlands. They approach sovereignty as a power to be seen as a unique island.

Yeah, so we are trying to be the best child of the class. We have a positive balance. We work hard for that. We don't fight every battle. We go after the ones we think we can win. Because of that, we established a really good working relationship with the different ministries in Holland. There is trust between us and Holland. We are smart about it, because we do know that when you do good, you get good (G_5SA).

The national government is more and more recognizing that Saba may need to be seen apart from the other two islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. Mr. Knops, the Dutch State Secretary for Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations, recently approached this in saying that the different islands of the Caribbean Netherlands can receive 'less for less and more for more'. This statement is based on the conditions that good governance and financial accountability are guaranteed at an adequate level. Saba has been complying with these conditions for years. For example, having a look at the *Regio Envelop*, a fund made available by the national government because of the special relations with the Caribbean Netherlands, 30 million was available for the BES islands (Rijksoverheid 2018). Out of these 30 million, Saba has received 13.5 million. So that is almost half although being by far the smallest island.

There is some incidental money, but then you can only do things incidentally, which can be tricky. The Netherlands also recognizes this, but does not want to increase the annual budget. But we do see that on Saba where we have our financial

affairs in check, that we as Saba get more and more room for extra budgets (G_10SA).

This dissolution of a singular approach of the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands is very much welcomed on Saba. The national government sets priorities, implement laws and policies but not always recognizes that the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands all have different characteristics. The people I spoke to do not see themselves as victims of 'recolonization' but instead, are working actively to maintain a good relationship with the European Netherlands where, ideally, the Netherlands should take a step out of their comfort zone to think about and with the citizens of Saba what would work for the island (G_8SA). Because of managing the relationship between the two governments, the local government sees more and more room for internal sovereignty.

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

It depends per ministry how much 'Caribbean minded' they are, how willing they are taking their responsibilities and listening to the needs of the island (NG_3SA; G_5SA; G_11SA). When talking about the change of responsibility and sovereignty, 10-10-10 is mostly mentioned as the turning point. Besides the constitutional change within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, a change within the European Netherlands happened as well. On the 14th of October in 2010, a new cabinet in the Netherlands was formed. The Dutch Caribbean islands were in the spotlights for four days. After that, they had to deal with the new cabinet that just started in their function, where everything was new for them as well. When Rutte, since then the prime minister of the Netherlands, took office on this date, the VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) has been in power ever since.

It comes out of feeling responsible. This is more one of the bad cabinets for the islands. CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal), D66 (Democrats 66). Always been very pro-islands. And the VVD not so much. It is what it is, but we have some good contacts (G_5SA).

It is questioned, by different stakeholders on the island, if the Netherlands have accepted certain consequences after 10-10-10. For example, the international treaties. The national government is in the end responsible for ensuring that the international treaties and legislation are implemented on Saba.

You see, with Holland, they think that it is wonderful, international treaties are going to be translated into Kingdom legislation and then on the islands it becomes island legislation. How are we going to comply, how are we going to maintain it, how are we going to do that? We do not have the budget for all these treaties (G_8SA).

It may look nice on paper, but in fact international treaties are not always worked out on the islands, although there have been some improvements after 10-10-10 (NG_1SA). The government of Saba employed a lawyer who takes a closer look at the laws and treaties that are implemented by the national government on Saba. However, this is unique for Saba and does not facilitate the other two islands of the Caribbean Netherlands. This person reviews where the responsibilities are assigned to, what official should be the Kingdom government and not the local government. He explained to me that it can certainly be discussed to maintain some tasks, but that this includes a price tag, which the European Netherlands sometimes is not willing to take.

On the island itself, taking care of the environment is a natural habit of the Sabans (G_1SA; G_3SA; G_6SA; G_11SA). The island has always been maintained by the people living on Saba for more than 500 years.

Saba is very maintained by the Saban people. They are really proud and they love the island. They keep their surroundings clean (G_6SA).

Also with the implementation of the recycling program, the government of Saba felt supported by the civil society (G_11SA). The citizens of Saba see all the waste that is accumulated and saw how it was dumped at the landfill, and leaking into the sea. People on the island are aware of the importance of the sea for their economy (G_11SA). At the moment, the people who are working for organizations to preserve the nature and environment are mainly foreigners, concentrating in the active

NGOs¹⁴ on the island. The existing legislation and ordinances are mostly executed by the NGO SCF, founded in the '80s by a Dutch man. SCF is depending on funds provided by the local government as well as funds of the EU to execute their tasks. The organization is originally formed to preserve and manage the nature on Saba but has expanded the scope of its responsibilities (NG_1SA). It is structured to manage a number of functions now, including the management of Saba National Marine Park, the Saba Trail network and the Saba Trail and Information Centre. However, this causes some frictions.

We should not be involved in the management of waste. Cleaning areas and so on, we are maintaining them. There is a thin line where the border lies of who is responsible here (NG_1SA).

This scope of maintaining trails shows that there is a thin line in the definition of what this maintaining means. Does it involve cleaning the trails or keep them in a good condition. Depending on the scope of maintaining also influences to whom can be responsibility assigned, the public entity of Saba or SCF. Besides that, the perception of how well Saba is maintained differs between the local government and the NGOs. All the active NGOs on Saba are far more critical about the attitude of Saban citizens in how naturally they take care of their surroundings. They mostly argue that Saba looks green but in fact, waste is dumped everywhere but is covered with the green plantation.

It may look easier, nicer than on the other islands, but the attitude of the people here is not different than any other island. The difference is the overwhelming green areas where we live (NG_1SA).

And

The locals are the one who litters the most. Not the tourists. There is a spot below the gas station, it is littered with trash. A lot of tourists don't go there, so to me

¹⁴ SABARC, Saba Conservation Foundation, Sea & Learn Foundation, Child Focus Foundation, Saba Nature Education

it is the local people. And also the fisherman, when they go out, they just throw the glass bottles in the sea (NG_4SA).

NGOs actively organize activities to educate the people living on Saba about the importance of the environment on this small island. They really focus on spreading knowledge to the civil society, especially the children. Every NGO has a (school) program where they take children out in the nature to teach them about the importance of taking care of their surroundings. With the small number of citizens living on the island, it is almost battling for the attention of these children (NG_3SA). Because of the available knowledge in NGOs, they feel responsible to share this with the civil society (NG_2SA; NG_4SA). If this is a task for the government is debatable. It could be more effective to stand up as a government in such a small closed island as Saba. This is because of a fear in the civil society of isolation if you hold others accountable (NG_4SA).

Saba is absolutely not an example of proper waste management. This needs to come from a government since there is an enormous fear in the civil society of isolation. The smallness of the island means that there is only a small pool of people who you can have around you. It is harder to hold these people accountable; you do not want to end up in a fight in such a small community. You have no choice. Therefore, the civil society does not want to have the task of talking to others about improper behavior or so (NG_1SA).

This task of holding others accountable should be the public entity of Saba, according to the NGOs. The local government can force this accountability due to legislation and policies. NGOs can execute those policies and legislation, when these documents are there and when resources are available. However, the public entity of Saba does not have sufficient money to assist the NGOs in all the executing tasks. Here, the government of the European Netherlands can play a role, as they have more capacities. Also, they might have some more background in scientific knowledge, where the importance of local knowledge should not be underestimated. The national government can create laws, policies or funds available, however this is (mostly) done by people working in the Netherlands who have no image, knowledge or sense of how the island really works or look like (G_11SA).

HURRICANE SEASON 2017

Irma passed by about 70 kilometers from Saba, causing Saba to deal with strong hurricane winds. Two weeks later, Maria passed south of Saba which brought a lot of rain to the island. Despite the impact of hurricane Irma was less than on St. Maarten, several families lost their home (Of the 700 households, 35 were very badly affected), there was debris everywhere and Saba appeared to be cut off from the world.

After the hurricane Irma, several house roofs were blown off by the powerful impact of Irma's 180 mph winds and the harbor was damaged. Besides that, the island's notorious greenery unfortunately incurred impeccable damage. The mountains throughout the island appeared brown, as of the result of a massive fire. In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, the European Netherlands government has made € 67 million available for the reconstruction of the public entities Saba and St. Eustatius. For the reconstruction of Saba, plans are worked out together with the public entities and the various ministries concerned, to restore buildings and infrastructure (G_5SA). In the context of reconstruction, Saba uses the money for the restoration of the (sea) port, the incineration of waste and the restoration of housing.

REWARDED ROCK

During the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, the extra investments were made under the condition that good governance and financial accountability are guaranteed at an adequate level. According to the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK), Saba has been complying with these conditions for years. This may be a good reason why the national government has faith in Saba spending the available money for recovery well, instead of St. Eustatius where the national government has taken over the management of this special municipality. The reporting responsibility for Saba is done through the regular budget process. For St. Eustatius, because of the political, administrative and financial situation on the island, their cooperation with the European Netherlands stays under high supervision.

During the aftermath of hurricane Irma and Maria, Saba faced some challenges. One major challenge was and is the image that Saba is nominally hit by the hurricanes. It is true that the impact is relatively small, especially in comparison with Dominica, Puerto Rico or St. Maarten. However, Saba has been hit by two violent hurricanes in a short period of time. This special municipality of the Netherlands has been able to do a lot on its own, but needs help to reduce the consequences and rebuild the island. This draws upon the other two challenges.

Being part of the Netherlands in times of a crisis leads to available funds where the island can make use of. The hurricane season of 2017 shows how the European Netherlands is still a really faraway place where the main decisions fall with regard to available financial resources. The following quote shows how the Netherlands, as a transatlantic country, is divided by a great distance which turns into difference.

There are several 'potjes' (funds) where we can make a claim on. Most of them are earmarked projects. And well, hurricanes are not covered within these funds. It is interesting to look at the national disaster fund in Holland. Nothing is mentioned about hurricanes, volcanoes or tsunamis. These are 3 major disasters that do not occur in the Netherlands, but are hazards here on this island. And well, we are part of the Netherlands... (G_7SA).

The national disaster fund is based on the climate profile of the European Netherlands, which is totally different from the climate profile of Saba. This influences the funds where the island can make a claim on and the need to make the government in the European Netherlands aware that they need (financial) aid.

Being a remote island, Saba was inaccessible for almost a month Saba after the passing of Irma and Maria (G_5SA). Saba is aware that it is a remote island that is not easy to reach. Saba could not count on help from abroad directly after the hurricane. The Fort Bay Harbor had suffered significant obstruction as a result of the hurricanes. This needed to be solved quickly since it is the main port of entry where practically all goods for the islands are delivered.

We knocked on the doors of the national government, literally, to ask for help. Especially the logistic hub for us, St. Maarten, was heavily destroyed and a reason to act quickly to provide basic services for us. We faced a shortage of drinking water, food and building materials (G_7SA).

As an island, Saba is strongly depending on St. Maarten, as it is the most important logistical hub for Saba. That island was hit far harder which influenced both the delivery of goods as well as the tourist industry, the main income of Saba. Tourists need to pass St. Maarten before they can fly or arrive by boat to Saba. However, with these images of plunder and a totally destroyed island, the tourists will stay away from St. Maarten and therefore from Saba (G_7SA).

The island of Saba was also depending on St. Eustatius and St. Maarten for handing in their damage assessment (*schade rapport*). Saba quickly handed in a damage assessment which provided figures about all the losses. The Dutch government waited with making funds available until they had an overview what the damages of all the three islands were. But these other two islands were not that fast as Saba was. So besides disconnecting with the other two BES islands, it would be positive for Saba to disconnect with St. Maarten and St. Eustatius as well in receiving funds to rebuild the island.

St. Maarten, I know because it is so close to us, makes a mess of it. We don't want anything to do with that (G_7SA).

In making the statement to the European Netherlands how Saba was affected, I saw a presentation that was made by an employee of the government of Saba for different stakeholders in the European Netherlands. The size of hurricane Irma was projected on the map of Europe, to show how Irma was around the same size of France and how it would affect the whole of Europe. This shows how it is more than obvious that Saba cannot handle such a hazard by themselves. The presentation also highlights how their situation on the island cannot be only traced back to their island alone and the damages it faced, but affects their surroundings as well, whereby they are depending on the goods that are delivered from, for example, St. Maarten.

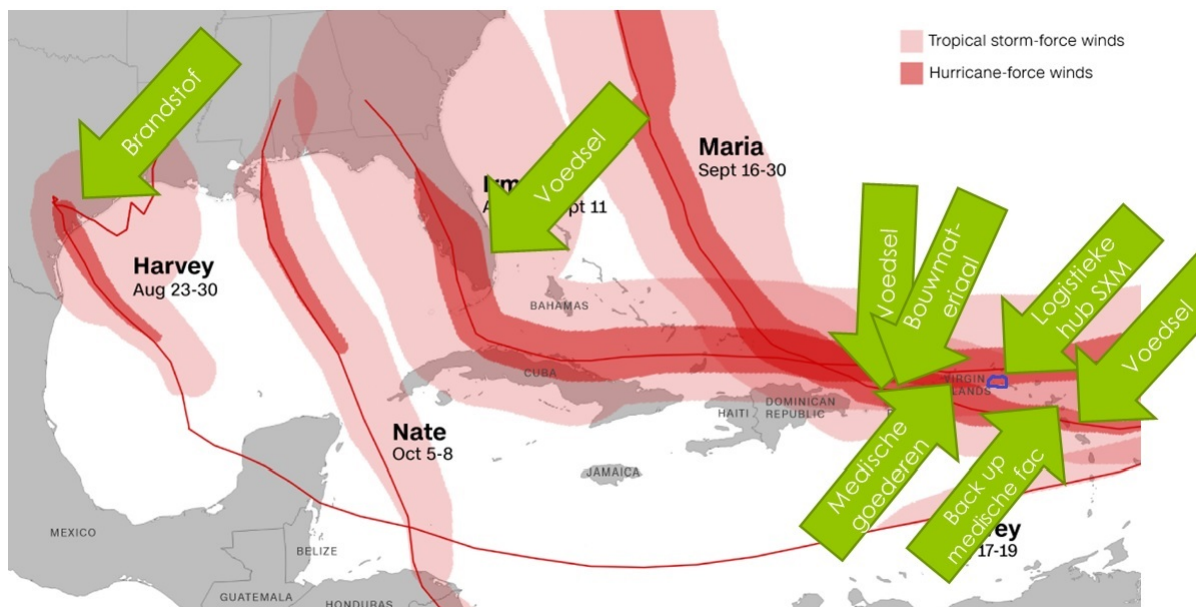


Figure 9. This image shows the international social disruption of hurricane season 2017, with hurricanes Harvey, Irma (the middle one) and Maria. Saba and St. Eustatius are circled blue. With this image, the author wants to show that, although the impact on Saba may be relatively less, the international impact is enormous. This has consequences for Saba as they are depending on the fuel (*brandstof*), food (*voedsel*), building materials (*bouwmaterialen*), medical goods (*medische goederen*), and the logistic hub St. Maarten (*Logistieke hub SXM*). Source: G_7SA.

Saba recognized the importance of being self-sufficient as an island in the hurricane region. There was a lot of waste, such as debris, after the hurricanes. Saba was not able to store all this extra waste because of the lack of land. A lot of waste needed to be burned, however the burning process did not happen properly because of a damaged air burner due to hurricane Irma (G_11SA). They want to be prepared for a next hurricane season with a waste-management system that can efficiently handle large quantities of waste while still ensuring proper separation of recyclables (G_5SA; G_11SA). Under the heading of building back better, Saba requested towards the European Netherlands to invest in more proper waste management and especially one more sufficient. The public entity Saba also investigated the option to relocate the waste-burning installation to a more suitable location on the island that does not cause smoke issues in the village of St. Johns. The local government is aware of the health consequences for the citizens living and working in St Johns and therefore uses this option to address the waste problem thoroughly (G_2SA).

We finally have the financial means to relocate the waste-burning installation and all efforts must be made to make this a reality seeing that this has been a problem for the residents of St. Johns for many decades (G_5SA).

In this case it was quite easy to receive some money (G_10SA). The European Netherlands government wants that all the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands are more self-sufficient. So, it was not difficult to receive some money for recycling. The Ministry of I&W¹⁵ first proposed the development of a regional waste installation. This waste installation would then be located on St. Maarten and processing the waste from all three Leeward Islands, St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius. However, the government of Saba is rather skeptical about this (G_11SA). The plans have been there before. After the hurricane season their focus is on being self-sufficient and do not want to wait or have anything to do with more dependency on St. Maarten. The Saba government is currently discussing the plans of a new open-air burner on Saba with the Ministry of I&W. A new recycling information campaign is also planned.

On Saba, many preparations were carried out in advance to limit the damage as much as possible (G_7SA). The citizens cleaned up loose littering waste, made the houses more robust and the local government arranged the needed communication network (G_7SA).

It starts with mitigation. The preparation of the storm was well executed. All radars worked together. We have invested a lot in making people aware of the storm. We also do this with the environment in general, to make people aware of recycling and the environment (G_7SA).

Saba was complimented by the European Netherlands government for their preparations before the start of the hurricane season in 2017 (Ministry of Justice and Security 2018). The impacts of a hurricane were influenced by the organizational preparations carried out by the national government as well, for example the

¹⁵ Since 2017, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment is replaced by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water management.

cooperation with the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) (G_7SA). Within the National government's report on preparations for emergency response and crisis management in the Caribbean Netherlands, there is dealt with the BES Security act (*Veiligheidswet BES*) (Ministry of Justice and Security 2018). If we look at the preparation for a hurricane on the islands of the Caribbean Netherlands, the following is stated:

The Ministry of Defense has organized several exercises in recent years. These exercises were mainly focused on preparations for the hurricane season, the so-called Hurex exercises (p.6).

Both the local as well as the national government took their forward-looking responsibility which also influenced the willingness to take backward responsibility. Due to the hurricanes, the European Netherlands government made money available for the government of Saba to execute reparations and/or improvements. The backward-looking responsibility is again project based.

The news of the day, fine. Holland putted some money in there and they go back to the way things were. Sounds bad, but it is not entirely the case. Saba's overall strategy has been sustainable development. That just continues, also without the support of Holland (G_9SXM).

RECAP

Since 10-10-10, Saba became one of the BES islands and faced more influence from the government of the European Netherlands. This government approached the BES islands via one singular approach, which resulted in BES laws and BES policies. However, the implementation of these documents is inadequate because of a mismatch because of different characteristics between the islands as well as a lack of available resources. Available money is lacking to implement these laws and policies since the annual budget is based on the minimum threshold of the responsibilities the public entity of Saba has. The government of the European Netherlands is more and more recognizing this and hands out extra funds for the BES islands. To make use of these funds, the three different islands can hand in

different projects which need to be in line with the purpose of this fund. This process between the public entity of Saba and the government of the European Netherlands is sometimes slowed by the other two islands. Since recently, the government of the European Netherlands makes a distinction between the three islands with the practice of 'less for less, more for more'. This means that the islands who comply with good governance and financial accountability, receive more financial responsibility and financial freedom in implementing projects. Not perse the amount of budget, but mostly the trust that they will take care of the money spend properly. Saba has been complying with these conditions for years. The power of the public entity of Saba is that they work closely with the national government and ensure direct and good contacts.

Since the distance between those two governments is enormous, it is sometimes hard to convince the national government to pay attention to this island. After 10-10-10, the government of the European Netherlands bears the final responsibility for waste governance. In the VROM BES a lot of responsibilities are assigned to the public entity of Saba. Due to a lack of available resources, the implementation is lacking. The national government does take some responsibility in providing resources. However, this is mainly project-based which makes it hard to really enforce and implement ordinances and legislations in a sustainable way. After the hurricane season of 2017, the national government made money available for reconstruction on Saba. Part of this money is used to solve the problem of waste. Saba recognizes the importance of being self-sufficient. With the money made available they want to tackle the waste problem thoroughly by installing a new installation on a different location and additional campaigns to promote recycling. However, again this fund is project-based and it is questioned to what extent the plans will continue to be successful.

ST. MAARTEN

YOUNG AUTONOMOUS ST. MAARTEN

After 10-10-10, St. Maarten became an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The government had to create institutions for internal affairs starting from zero compared to Curacao where the Netherlands Antilles government was seated (G_7SXM). Although institutions had to be formed, this does not mean that there was no local legislation at all. With regard to waste governance, a waste ordinance was created by the island council of St. Maarten in 1993 already. Within this ordinance it was stated that, in the interest of the protection of the environment, it is needed to limit the burden waste has on the environment and to establish regulations regarding the collection and disposal of residential waste, bulky waste, liquid waste, commercial waste, car wrecks and other categories of waste. Although it clearly states what is forbidden, it does not say who should execute this legislation, a problem that comes back also after 10-10-10. There is a problem of accountability and this has created an enormous landfill on St. Maarten. The landfill, or dump as it is called by the local citizens, has been a problem for years. More than thirty years ago the dump was created at the Great Salt Pond. All the waste that is produced by St. Maarten is randomly dumped here, something as a waste separation does not exist. There is no control at all of what is dumped on the dump, although there is a sign that implies that this officially should happen. Because all the waste is mixed, chemical reactions take place that leads to continuous fires. Although the maximum capacity of the dump according to the local authorities was reached around 2008, landfilling continued. The consequences of the uncontrolled waste stream are becoming increasingly visible on St. Maarten.



Figure 10. The location of the landfill on St. Maarten In front is the capital city Philipsburg. The building in the middle of the picture with the green roof is the government building. Across the street is the University of St. Maarten located next to the sport fields. Source: G_6SXM.



Figure 11. Sign on the landfill on St. Maarten where opening hours and materials allowed are mentioned. Picture is made by the author.

The different stakeholders I spoke to are happy that they got rid of the Netherlands Antilles government as they now have more autonomy on internal affairs than before. The severe relationship with Curacao influenced the available funds that came from the Dutch government for St. Maarten as well as how some policies were executed or developed or where different priorities were set (G_1SXM). Dutch financial supervision continued after 10-10-10, but besides that, it seems that it was expected that St. Maarten had everything in check on the 11th of October, 2010. The island is still a 'child', as some respondents name it referring to the time period of eight years that St. Maarten is an autonomous country. However, it has to deal with some 'adult' problems, such as the international harbor and airport.

St. Maarten is still a child. There is too much that St. Maarten can handle now, infrastructure, the international airport, climate change, but also the painful history of colonialism. So, you do have the adult problems, but not... No capacity at all... (NG_5SXM).

This new status of St. Maarten as autonomous raises some problems, especially to the aspect of sovereignty. The stories I heard from the different stakeholders I spoke to on St. Maarten, showed their perception of sovereignty of this island. Most of the times, the first thing that came up in the interviews was the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, or *Statuut* (the Dutch word) as a lot of my respondents name it. The big problem lies in the Charter and how the different governments are able to 'play' with the written agreement. This is especially relevant since the environment is an autonomous affair for St. Maarten.

This Statuut (Charter) allows that the Dutch government can easily say: "Yeah, but you're an autonomous country", mostly mentioned when it is useful. They play with the terms the Kingdom and the Netherlands, using their preference (G_7SXM).

This situation of 'playing' with the Charter is, on the island, argued as if only the Dutch government does so. This can be explained by the asymmetrical power relations within the Kingdom. A lot of discussion still takes place if 10-10-10 was the right decision, where some stakeholders actively are striving for a status as a

province instead of an autonomous country within the Kingdom. The reason therefore is more political say within the Dutch government. This is strengthened by the perception that politics of St. Maarten has an oligarchic dimension.

I don't think we made the right decisions with 10-10-10. I think we should be part of the Netherlands Caribbean structure, as a provincie (province). 10-10-10 simply legitimizes this decision-making ability of the leaders to do what they want. And we're not living in a democratic autonomy. We're living in an oligarchic autonomy. That is an important point because we got these four or five families that run everything (NG_2SXM).

The discussion that takes places is what the role of the Dutch government should be in taking care of an autonomous matter, as the environment and thus waste problem. St. Maarten chose to be autonomous which has its consequences for the governance of waste. On the one hand, it can be argued that the Netherlands do not have to play a role in waste governance. St. Maarten needs to confess color; if they want to be autonomous, they need to act as an autonomous country. On the other hand, because of the great welfare of the Netherlands, and because of the Kingdom relationship, they could give St. Maarten a guide how to 'grow up' (G_6SXM). Some see St. Maarten as an incompetent child and therefore, as parents, the Netherlands should take care (NG_4SXM).¹⁶

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

In the annual overview of 2010-2011 it is stated that "Governor Holiday paid a working visit to the landfill as part of his objective to promote environmental governance. The visit was prompted by the Governor's concerns as a result of the recurring fires at the dumpsite. In this regard, the Governor was specifically interested in the plans aimed at building installations to process the different waste streams and emphasized the importance of bringing about a safe, sustainable and

¹⁶ I'm aware of the critics on the discourse where colonies are framed as children. Since my respondents framed St. Maarten this way, I use their words to stay close to their opinion. My opinion about this way of characterization is that framing the former colony as child and the former motherland as parent, you remain in the heritage of unequal development and relations. However, since St. Maarten is still part of the Kingdom, the Netherlands can give St. Maarten assistance. Not as a parent but as an equal partner within the Kingdom.

long-term solution for the waste management in the interest of the people of St. Maarten” (Annual Overview 2010-2011; p.61). Also in 2015, it was acknowledged how the problems of the landfill were getting out of hand. The parliament questioned what happened with the plans for the landfill from previous governments and why it seems impossible to solve the problem (TodaySXM 2015). In 2016, the *Organisatiebesluit Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening, Milieu en Infrastructuur* has been published. Within this document the tasks of the Ministry of VROMI are set out. Article 2 states that the ministry needs to take care for effective policies in the field of solid and liquid waste (p.3). Although all the employees working for the ministry broadcast the same vision towards the citizens of St. Maarten, it needs to be acknowledged that within this ministry, different roles and tasks are divided, accompanied with different (decision) power (G_2SXM; G_3SXM; G_4SXM). There are for example the departments who are concerned with the inspection and permits, which are depending on the department that is concerned with drafting policies and legislation, which need to be approved by the parliament. The importance of the power that belongs to the department will become clear in the following paragraphs.

Why, with the awareness of the problem of waste by the government of St. Maarten, did it go so far, that after the hurricane season of 2017, the landfill poses (still) a serious threat to the inhabitants of St. Maarten? Within my theoretical framework, I argued how the government should take responsibility in protecting the environment for the common good such as the environment and not the individuals themselves individually. Assigning responsibility to the citizen would be remarkable on the island of St. Maarten where almost 90% does not come from the island, but come from other Caribbean islands, Asian countries or the European Netherlands (NG_3SXM; NG_5SXM). The people I spoke to are very skeptical about the environmental attitude of the citizens of St. Maarten.

The people living and working on St. Maarten are here to make money. If you come here to make money, you don't care about the environment and your surroundings. You're gone after a couple of years (G_7SXM).

And

If people do not come from here, migrants and the like, and you only live here for two / three years, how much pride do you really have, for where you live (NG_4SXM).

It is acknowledged that people took more pride for their island the last years (NG_4SXM). This is also visible in the voluntary clean ups of beaches for example. These people feel a sense of responsibility (NG_3SXM; NG_5SXM). However, the group that takes this responsibility is most of the time the same group of volunteers and most of the times the more educated people who have a better financial position and therefore the financial luxury to participate in these volunteer actions (NG_5SXM). They have time to volunteer instead of having three jobs to cover the costs. Therefore, big groups, mostly seen as the ones who need to be reached, are left out in these actions and harder to approach or make aware of the importance of the environment. NGOs therefore actively focus on education, to educate the children about the importance of the environment and nature. This does not mean that there is no role for the government of St. Maarten. Assigning responsibility to the government of St. Maarten is however also challenging. The status and role of the government on the island is highly debated and questioned by the people I spoke to.

After 10-10-10, a more bureaucratic governance has been formed (G_1SXM). As a result, the politics of St. Maarten are less stable than before 10-10-10. The government structure is based on coalition. When someone doesn't agree, they become independent and the government falls again (G_1SXM). St. Maarten has its eight government since the island became autonomous in 2010. This political instability is especially challenging with regard to an environmental issue because of the time that is needed before an environmental issue has improved. This makes that no politician is really burdened with such an issue as they are in the parliament for only four years and in the case of St. Maarten for only one year since now. They need to find a project for a shorter time to make sure that they are re-chosen (G_1SXM).

With the change of ministers every year, it is hard to create a sustainable long-term vision. Although some policies and guidelines do exist, these do not turn into legislation and remain 'empty policies' (NG_1SXM). There is some legislation on the

island, where most of them are adopted from when St. Maarten was still part of the Netherlands Antilles. Therefore, most of them are outdated or do not fit the characteristics of the island very well. The legislation needs to be updated. In order to do so, there is political stability and will needed to create or update the legislations. Second, when there is legislation, there is political will needed to implement and enforce the legislation. The implementation of law is a disaster (G_3SXM).

The government can be more critical about the enforcement on the permits. Inspection, control, it just not happens. You actually have a kind of papieren tijger (an expression for something that looks threatening and dangerous, but is easy to get rid of) that is created (G_3SXM).

The problem of legislation has also become visible with regard to the waste governance. The situation at the dump symbolizes the political instability of St. Maarten which leads to no movement. For example, offering waste is free on St. Maarten. This makes the dump attractive to entrepreneurs on the French side of the island, where you have to pay tax for the waste (G_1SXM). Cooperation with the French side is explored, however it never established. Another problem is the location of the dump. Besides in the middle of the island and next to the capital city of St. Maarten, the dump is located at Great salt pond, a place that played an important role in the colonial history of St. Maarten. The salt lake was the reason that St. Maarten was once occupied by the Dutch. The dump is actually located in the middle of an important cultural heritage site (G_5SXM). Ancestors are really dishonored this way. Some new monuments are placed around salt pond to remember the colonial history of St. Maarten, although it is questioned how relevant they are. It would be more significant to protect the environment and heritage in honoring ancestors than placing those new monuments (G_5SXM). This is proposed by different people on the island (NG_2SXM; G_8SXM). They handed in proposals to manage the waste properly and turn the current place of the landfill into a park or walk along the pond to remember the history of St. Maarten. These proposals are not new, however, the plans never managed to be approved by the ministers and/or parliament of St. Maarten.

Although there is more bureaucracy in the political system of St. Maarten, some argue that it (still) has an oligarchic dimension with some gatekeepers and decision makers who rule the island. On this island, it is more about the decision makers instead of politicians (G_2SXM). With regard to the dump, it is argued how some key players will not allow any difference in the management of the dump because they earn money with the landfill and regulations as they have existed the past years. This is especially cynical since the Ministry of VROMI is labelled as 'the power source' to whom 'you have to pay' to be able to do business on St Maarten (PWC 2014). This means that solving the issue of the landfill is in the hands of the Ministry of VROMI instead of the whole government of St. Maarten. A more nuanced view is that the government does not approach the problem of the landfill as environmental but are focusing on the financial and/or economic aspects (NG_1SXM; NG_4SXM), which weakens the urgency to solve the problem as fast as possible for the citizens of St. Maarten.

The government is incompetent, trying to gain money out of a waste plant. They are discussing who gets a piece of the pie. Not how to solve this problem fast and properly. Besides that, it is out of reach. It is out of reach because of knowledge and money (NG_4SXM).

It is not just the ministers and politicians; it is about the ones who have a strategic position. This is strengthened by the smallness of the island which makes that politics becomes personal. This smallness, as mentioned by Veenendaal (2016), influences the willingness of politicians, or in the words of my respondents: decision makers, to implement policies and execute legislation. This is mostly because of the importance of good social relations on the island which may be threatened when there is friction about a certain (environmental) issue (G_3SXM).

Besides political instability and willingness, there is also a lack of capacity to implement the existing ordinances. With regard to the protection of nature, the government of St. Maarten signed a service level agreement with an NGO, The St. Maarten Nature Foundation. That an NGO takes care of the nature is not unique for St. Maarten, since on all Dutch Caribbean islands taking care of the nature is dedicated to NGOs. However, it is unique that the NGO has an official service level

agreement with the government where the division of tasks is clearly described and where they receive a yearly amount of funding to execute these tasks (NG_1SXM). Because of the NGO status, it has its pro's and con's. One of the positive benefits of being an NGO is that you maintain your independence, that if there is an issue, they can lobby or complain about it. On the other hand, there are issues regarding the existing legislation and the capacity that remain (NG_1SXM). As an NGO, they do not have the power and ability to decide what legislation should be in place. When the government needs assistance to execute different tasks, the Nature Foundation can do so. However, to legitimate the execution of these tasks, legislation needs to be there (NG_1SXM). The Nature Foundation already took some actions with regard to the dump. They conducted a survey two years ago among people living at the dump. This showed that half of the approximately 500 respondents have respiratory problems as a result of the fires. More than 70 percent suffers from a burning sensation in the eyes, nose or throat. However, the only thing they can do is create awareness and lobby. The real change needs to come from the government of St. Maarten.

HURRICANE SEASON 2017

Hurricane Irma was an extremely powerful and catastrophic hurricane that struck St. Maarten on September 6, 2017 followed by Maria two weeks later on the 19th and 20th of September 2017. Although communication with St. Maarten was not possible in the beginning, it soon became clear that the hurricane had devastated the island. The number of deaths and injuries on the Dutch part of St. Maarten remained relatively limited to four and 43 respectively, but it was estimated that 91% of all houses were damaged and that almost all public facilities were destroyed, including the communication infrastructure, the port, the airport and the water supply. The damage on the island is considerably larger than the annual gross national product of St. Maarten. It is evident that help from outside is needed to be provided, because too few resources are available locally. The island will have to start from scratch, creating itself anew, physically and psychologically. St. Maarten has been spared any additional damage as most of the category 5 Hurricane Maria passed south of the island which led to tropical storm winds and a bit of rain.

When I was on St. Maarten, I attended a theatre play. The play was based on 'The Government Inspector', by the Russian and Ukrainian dramatist and novelist Nikolai Gogol. The play is a comedy of errors, satirizing human greed, stupidity and the extensive political corruption of Imperial Russia. The play was 'translated' to the situation of St. Maarten after the hurricane season of 2017. Before the play started, we were welcomed with a shot of vodka as well as a song. I would like to point out some parts of the song since it describes the political situation of St. Maarten in a more poetical manner.

*I don't know who to blame
But it is a bloody shame
Could it be Donald Trump
Who lit the fire on the dump?*

*I applied, but got no answer
What am I supposed to do?
Stand in line to get some service
There's no end to any queue!*

*Every year a big event
We form another government
It has become a bacchanal
Bigger than the carnival!*

*Out of money, out of jobs
We don't let it get us down
Irma gave us one big blowjob
Now it is time to have some fun!*

*Come and hear our humble story
Of the inspector general
He is handsome, he is funny
And he likes to take our money!*

This song is very skeptical about the government of St. Maarten and also the dialogue between the government and the citizens of St. Maarten. With this song in mind, how is the practice of sovereignty and responsibility perceived by different stakeholders on the island with regard to waste governance?

AID AND SOVEREIGNTY

The government of St. Maarten clearly failed to respond in an accurate manner before and during the aftermath of hurricane Irma. In the Netherlands the question was raised if the Dutch government should be involved in the aftermath of the hurricane and the rebuilding of the island (Volkskrant September 15, 2017). The first reaction of the Dutch government was immediately after the hurricane hit, where they gave 7 million euros for emergency relief on the island. The projects that were set up with this fund were carried out by local and international organizations. The focus was on rebuilding homes, support for children and young people and employment (Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2017). One projects from the last category involves a project 'from waste to work', carried out by the Red Cross to transforming demolition waste into new products, drawing on knowledge of Dutch startups. Further funds for relief were first debated between the Dutch government and the government of St. Maarten, as I describe below. The Red Cross, aside from the Dutch government, raised a special funding, broadcasted by (Dutch) major national television channels, to collect donations for emergency aid and reconstruction. They raised almost 20 million euros, mostly coming from Dutch citizens.

In November 2017, the Dutch government announced that they would make 550 million euros available to rebuild the island of St. Maarten, where of 7 million was already released. During the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, the lack of good governance was often mentioned by the Dutch government why the hurricane had that much impact (Volkskrant September 19, 2017). This lack of good governance made that the Dutch government decided to bind some restrictions to the fund. "It's a lot of money for a small population. We want to make sure that it is spent in a good way", Mr. Knops, the State Secretary of Internal affairs and Kingdom relations said (The Daily Herald 2017). The financial aid from the Netherlands was already

available in November, but the Dutch government set conditions that St. Maarten had to accept before the money would be released.

In answering the question about sovereignty in the aftermath of the hurricane with regard to the waste governance, my respondents mostly mentioned the conditions of both the Netherlands and the World Bank (WB) that are attached to the fund for St. Maarten. The two conditions the Netherlands attached to this fund were that an integrity committee would be established to make sure the money is properly spent and that the Royal Military Police (*Koninklijke Marechaussee*) takes over border control on the island. The border control is a needed condition according to the Dutch government to control persons and goods, such as drugs and weapons control, and combatting illegal streams of migrants and money, crossing St. Maarten borders during the country's reconstruction. The Prime Minister of St. Maarten at that time first refused to accept the conditions that the Dutch government proposed before providing aid. He accused the Dutch government of orchestrating a "political conspiracy" to oust him from power (Volkskrant October 31, 2017). However, because of the enormous impact the hurricane had on the island, he had no majority within the parliament to refuse the condition and had to accept the conditions proposed by the Dutch government. With regard to the Dutch Integrity Chamber, it is questioned:

The Dutch Integrity Chamber. Do you take something that doesn't belong to you? And within this: do you look at aspects that are not a kingdom affair? You see, when Irma passed, things went out of order. There was no security anymore, which is kind of a kingdom affair. The Dutch government has to do something, but also have to be careful that it doesn't lead to 'scheve gezichten' (distorted relationships) (G_7SXM).

Besides the conditions of the fund, it is questioned in which areas St. Maarten should receive aid and who decides for which projects the money will be used. Once both the Dutch and St. Maarten government agreed on the conditions, the WB got involved. The WB was chosen as a *neutral* authority to manage the financial aid from the Netherlands for reconstruction on the island. According to Mr. Knops, the Dutch

State Secretary for Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations, has this to do with the "special (read: colonial) history" of the Netherlands and St. Maarten (NOS 2018).

Since April 2018, the WB manages the Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund to help St. Maarten build back better and increase resilience following the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma. The aim of the St. Maarten Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund is to support recovery efforts and help the government of St. Maarten prepare projects with well-defined development objectives, and provide capacity support for effective, efficient and transparent project execution (World Bank 2018). Within the steering committee, that keeps track of the correct spending of the money, the Netherlands, the WB and St. Maarten all have their own representatives. The government of St. Maarten could hand in different priorities they found important and wanted to work on after the hurricanes. However, these priorities need to be in line with the view of the WB. In other words, the WB sets conditions, partly on behalf of the Dutch government, that needs to be accomplished before St. Maarten can really receive the money to rebuild the island. The 'neutral' position of the WB can be questioned as the Dutch government is actually steering indirectly the conditions, and therefore the availability of financial aid, where St. Maarten needs to comply with.

The World Bank, I was there with some processes, they asked us to set priorities. What are the topics, what needs to be done. But they also said; we are instructed by the Dutch to spend that money, but that is under our conditions, under our corporate governance, that means that it needs to be in line with our starting points how we see the world. And that is, well, you just have to search the internet, those rules go very far. Like CO2 footprint needs to be 0. They said to us, everything you will do in the coming period, we test what kind of effect this has on nature and the environment. If it has negative effects, in principle, we will not do it. And because they control the money and the innovation, they force innovation and consciousness on the island in this way (G_2SXM).

In other words, if St. Maarten wants to receive the money, they need to create and develop projects that need to be in line with the conditions of the WB. Furthermore, when the money is made available, it needs to be reported how and where the

money is spent. According to my respondents, this condition is also challenging, mostly because of the difference of culture between St. Maarten and the Netherlands and capacity on the island.

The conditions of the Netherlands and the World Bank are linked to good governance and their culture. That is miles away from our culture. This means that we have to report on good governance in many areas. If one thing is not in the culture of the Caribbean, it is the writing of data (G_2SXM).

And

We do not have the capacity and the infrastructure to report. The logistics are not there, as well as the people. So, what is going to happen, if I am minister? Then I'm going to hire an account bureau and that's going to gather all the information and data. A lot of extra costs have to be made to make those reports. And where comes this salary of the accountant from? From the fund (G_1SXM).

Even that the Dutch government made a fund available for St. Maarten to rebuild the island, they set some conditions under the heading of building back better. This influences the political sovereignty of St. Maarten. It shows that lot things can happen on the island, but that the final decision power lies in The Hague, where the Dutch (and Kingdom) government is seated.

Furthermore, this difficult relationship between the governments, strengthened with the involvement of the WB, leads to a long process before money is made available for the necessary repairing and rebuilding of the island. The Dutch government mostly mentions the political instability of the island why it takes so long (Volkskrant April 4, 2018) and because of the negotiations with the WB. This bureaucratic structure makes that the people living on St. Maarten have to wait till all the different conditions are accomplished and agreed on. This is not received well on the island.

The Netherlands says; the money is regulated by the World Bank now. And, well the World Bank has put us in a very special position. We have become beggars for what we want, that's how I see this relationship with the World Bank. We are now

nine months further, and no single roof has yet been repaired via the World Bank. The funds that we have used for the repairs are via UNDP and Red Cross (both international NGOs). We are working hard. But if a hurricane arrives tomorrow and people do not have shelter, they will start tipping doors of houses where they can hide. And then they will treat people differently. That is to say, that I fear, because it is, the white people have better houses. And the black less. It can become a racial problem (G_1SXM).

It is obvious that the damage of the two hurricanes is too big to solve locally and has created tensions both on the island as well as within the Kingdom. However, when the government of St. Maarten wants to receive aid, and thus money, from the Dutch government, they have to give up some decision-making autonomy. They have to follow the route that is set out by the Dutch government, with the control of the WB as a 'neutral' mediator.

BUILD BACK BETTER

Build Back Better (BBB) refers to a range of improvements on the pre-disaster situation on St. Maarten. After the hurricane, the island was totally destroyed and needs to be rebuild, starting from the bottom. The hurricane did ruin more than only the houses and the hills. It also destroyed the one-pillar-based economy; tourism. When Irma happened, the veil of the economy was removed. In that situation, where everything has been destroyed, it is visible what a government is or should be and where it stands for.

The reaction on Irma was a disaster itself. This goes for both the government on St. Maarten as well as the Dutch government. The Netherlands can do some things, solve some things, however, it also needs to come from within the community and people here on St. Maarten (G_7SXM).

The context of BBB also implies an increased participation of the civil society of St. Maarten. The hurricane showed and exposed who was here for the money and who has a heart for the island and the community (G_7SXM). The St. Maarten National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), full with images of smiling people who work

hard to rebuild the island, has been drafted to build back better the island during the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and Maria. This document was found on the website of the Dutch government which, I argue, means that the Dutch government is supporting this plan.¹⁷ In the preface of the document is mentioned how this plan is formed under the leadership of the government of St. Maarten, with the *financial* support of the government of the Netherlands and the *strategic* support of the WB. The difference of financial and strategic support is something to highlight. Giving support in financial terms might be strategic in the sense that it shows willingness to help and may create less tensions and confrontations between the different governments within the Kingdom. The strategic support of the WB implicates that they assist St. Maarten in complying with the conditions set by the Dutch government and implementing different projects, providing knowledge from a 'neutral' standpoint.

On page 3 of the plan, in the very beginning, is mentioned how this plan is aiming to

...respond to a disaster without precedent, to stimulate and shape the recovery process, and to guide the nation to a resilient and sustainable future, St. Maarten has developed a comprehensive NRRP. Its overarching goal is to restore, secure, and strengthen the well-being of the people of St. Maarten. This requires a resilient community in a healthy living environment, a resilient, growing, and more diversified economy, and a transparent, effective government with enhanced capacity (p.3).

This response implies a backward-looking response since the government of St. Maarten reacts on the event of the hurricane instead of responding in advance to avoid such a devastation of the island. This goes the same for the Dutch government with supplying financial support. Some forward looking responsibility was taken, for example Dutch marines were stationed on the island who helped the population with the preparations for the arrival of the heavy hurricane (Ministry of Defense 2017).

Marlin, the prime-minister during the time of hurricane Irma, requested additional assistance from the Dutch military "as a precautionary measure" (National Recovery

¹⁷ See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2018/08/28/sint-maarten-national-recovery-and-resilience-plan-engelstalig>

and Resilience Plan 2018). Furthermore, the Ministry of VROMI lowered the water levels of the Great Salt Pond below sea level to increase the pond's holding capacity and minimize flood risk due to heavy rainfall with the passing of Irma. The government carried out an assessment of hurricane shelters and the landfill. However, after Irma, there was the question; where was the emergency plan? coming from the citizens of St. Maarten who felt unsafe (Volkskrant September 8, 2017). Also having a look at the NRRP Timeline, the first response starts during the first three months after the hurricane, framed as the emergency response (p. xiv).

During the emergency response, the Dutch Ministry of I&M brought garbage trucks to St. Maarten because the waste on the street was a point of concern in connection with public health due to decaying dirt, which could become a breeding ground for diseases. All this waste was brought to the landfill which was already full. After the hurricane season of 2017, a lot of auto wrecks and debris added a second landfill on the other side of the road, called the 'baby dump'. It would be suspected that this creation of a second dump goes beyond most undesirable situation. However, an official sign of this new dump site is even implemented along the road, guiding people to the new created environmental problem.



Figure 12. Sign along the road for the direction to the new, second dump on St. Maarten opposite of the old dump. Picture is made by the author.

With the agreement on the fund between the WB, the Dutch government and the government of St. Maarten, special attention was given to the landfill. The waste problem is one of the four 'emergency projects' that are now under the supervision of the WB. More than 100 million dollars will be made available to implement (better) management and a separation of waste at the dump (Volkskrant November 4, 2018). That this amount will be spend on the landfill is decided by the Dutch government who has the final say over the budget.

Although this problem already exists for over 40 years, the hurricane putted the island and therefore this big environmental problem, the landfill, in the spotlight. Different actors have become involved to tackle this problem of the dump during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017. Besides the Dutch government, the Public Prosecution Service also investigates the landfill. This year, according to the local Public Prosecution Service, some twenty large fires were burning on the dump, see figure 13. There is discussion if these fires are a result of chemical reactions or are lit on purpose. A number of times the nearby government building had to be evacuated and schools, the university and the police station had to close temporarily. After receiving different declarations of concerned residents against the state of St. Maarten, the Public Prosecutor Service was struggling with their role since they mostly are concerned with cases of murder and crime.

We are not involved in talking about the future of waste processing on the island, which is a political choice. But Minister Giterson (Minister of VROMI) said earlier this year: the dump is a 'giant murderer'. That is when we said: that is something of our business (G_6SXM).



Figure 13. A fire on the landfill on St. Maarten which causes dark smoke. Source: G_6SXM.

Still, the care for a healthy environment is the core business of the government (G_6SXM). In the governing program of 2018-2022, the government of St. Maarten declares the problem of waste as a key priority for (re)building a sustainable St. Maarten. The priority falls under the object of 'Setting it right' which needs to put St. Maarten back on track on a short term (p.20).

Implementing a sound solution for proper disposal of waste material and sewage on St. Maarten is a high priority. Overall, waste management needs to be better managed and should be done preferably in collaboration with our counterparts on Saint Martin. We will introduce incentive and awareness programs to encourage recycling and structure a waste and sewage management division (Government of St. Maarten 2018; p. 20).

This document shows the willingness of the government of St. Maarten to solve this over 30-years-old problem. Even some solutions that have been discussed before are brought up again. Under the heading of 'No time to waste', the Ministry of VROMI organized a waste forum on May 31, 2018 with different stakeholders to talk about the waste situation. They argue that this is the right moment to solve the waste issue in a sustainable way. With the involvement of the WB, and thus indirect the Dutch government, this may influence the taken responsibility with regard to the

waste on St. Maarten. This is strengthened by the fact that (financial) resources are available now. Not all my respondents were convinced of the capacity of the government of St. Maarten this time and remain suspicious.

Let me say that I think that the fact that the Netherlands has paid a lot of attention to the landfill has caused a bit of awakening of our decision-makers. Don't get me wrong, a lot of the civil servants, which are paying attention to the landfill fires have pushed for regulations for years, also within the Ministry of VROMI. The landfill is just a lack of political will (G_5SXM).

With the conditions that are set by the WB it might indeed be the right moment to tackle this waste problem thoroughly because of limited freedom how and where the money is spent on. It seems that the Dutch government has taken some responsibility in providing financial resources for an autonomous matter during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017. However, some question marks can be placed if this problem of the dump and the events of different fires over years is still an autonomous matter. It is a human right to live in a healthy environment with access to clean air and clean water. Human rights are a kingdom affair. Different respondents argue that this environmental problem has grown into a human rights issue (G_5SXM), where they refer to the case of Öneriyildiz v. Turkey (G_6SXM). The case originated in an application against the Republic of Turkey because of noncompliance by national authorities to correctly manage the municipal landfill. A 1991 expert report concluded that the landfill did not conform to relevant regulations and thus posed a serious health risk, especially because of the potential for a methane explosion. Authorities did not act on this information, and a methane explosion in April 1993 destroyed ten houses and killed nine people.

This example shows also aspects of the lack of good governance, which is a kingdom affair as well. It may not be a popular point of view because of the discussion of autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, but this environmental problem is poisoning the inhabitants of St. Maarten which needs to be solved by both the government of St. Maarten and the Dutch government.

In this area, and only in this area (!), the Dutch should take a more active role. They should put on higher supervision. But only on the landfill. The Dutch government comes in as a Kingdom, because of kingdom relations. And they should, because the problem is too big to be solved on the island level only. Putting in proper policies alone doesn't work, it doesn't make sense (NG_4SXM).

The last report of the visit of Mr. Knops to the island of St. Maarten mentions the needed improvement of waste governance, preferably in a regional context. The WB is preparing a short-term project for waste, which needs to reduce the fire lighting at the landfill site. He also emphasized the autonomous responsibility of the country and that it is now the turn of St. Maarten to make some progress.

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Since 10-10-10, St. Maarten is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Besides financial supervision by the Dutch government, it is expected that the island takes care of the autonomous matter as mentioned in the Charter, of which waste governance is one. Political instability has shaped the waste governance on the island. Different proposals have been designed but none of them is implemented partly because of this political instability, partly because of the position of different decision makers, influenced by the smallness of the island. Another problem is the lack of capacity on the island to implement and execute different policies. The St. Maarten Nature Foundation has therefore a service level agreement with the government of St. Maarten. However, their role is limited when no official legislation is in place. This unstable situation of the government of St. Maarten has its consequences for the taken responsibility for the environment, and more specifically waste governance on the island.

After the hurricane season of 2017, the Dutch government made a fund available, managed by the WB. The involvement of these two actors comes with an influence on the decision-making autonomy of St. Maarten. If they want to receive money from the Dutch government, they have to comply with different conditions which are, according to the people I spoke to, not in line with their capacity. Second, the

problem of the landfill is labelled as 'emergency project' where expertise and money, made available by the WB and the Dutch government, are intervening in an autonomous matter. Although it is emphasized that waste management is an autonomous matter and that the government of St. Maarten needs to respond to this urgent matter, the problem of the landfill has grown over 30 years and cannot be framed as an environmental problem anymore, but as a problem that touches upon human rights and good governance, which are both a kingdom affair.

6. CONCLUSION

The presentation of the gathered data is used in order to answer of the following research question that is central in this study:

How is the practice of sovereignty within the Kingdom of the Netherlands reflected in the differences between Saba (a special municipality of the Netherlands) and St. Maarten (an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands) when looking at the taken responsibility of waste governance during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017?

The Kingdom of the Netherlands as it exists nowadays is a result of colonialism. During the decolonization policy and the creation of the Charter, institutional mechanisms of colonial dominance have undergone a transition within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The “rule of force” has replaced the “rule of law” which has caused ambiguities within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Charter of the Kingdom states that foreign affairs, defense, national identity and the guarantee of good governance and human rights are kingdom affairs. The environment is an autonomous matter for the different countries within the Kingdom. In this study, I have described an environmental problem, the lack of waste governance, before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria on two Dutch Caribbean islands. These two Dutch Caribbean islands possess a different constitutional arrangement with the Netherlands. Saba is a special municipality, integrated in the governing system of the Netherlands, where St. Maarten is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This means that the government of St. Maarten has to take care of autonomous matters, such as the environment, on the island. For Saba, being a special municipality of the Netherlands since 2010, the Dutch ministries are responsible to take care of the environment. However, within the legislation, different responsibilities are assigned to the public entity of Saba.

In the end, all the Dutch Caribbean islands are responsible for carrying out environmental policies and legislation. In doing so, they do not have enough resources for a proper environmental management and therefore depend strongly on NGOs, who are depending on funds from either the government or abroad. This

dependency on funds influences therefore the taken responsibility for all stakeholders on the island, both for and after the hurricane season of 2017. During the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, the practice of sovereignty and responsibility is mostly linked to financial dependency of the European Netherlands.

For Saba, being a special municipality of the Netherlands, this financial dependency manifests in the annual budget and funds made available by the national government to carry out projects. These funds are made available for all the three BES islands and therefore Saba is depending on Bonaire and St. Eustatius in terms of approval of projects and distribution of the fund. After the hurricanes Irma and Maria, Saba had to hand in a damage assessment and needed to wait until St. Eustatius and St. Maarten, the other two Leeward islands hit by hurricane Irma and Maria, had done this as well before receiving financial aid. During the aftermath of hurricane Irma and Maria, Saba faced how much, as a small island, they are depending on others, not only in financial terms but also in receiving goods and dealing with the amount of waste occurred by these two hurricanes. The Dutch government first proposed to create a waste facility for St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba. However, Saba is actively asking for a more independent waste operation because of the severe relationship between the government of the European Netherlands and the governments of St. Maarten and St. Eustatius.

The aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017 shows how Saba would like to become more sovereign, as in, becoming more independent of the other two Leeward Islands as well as becoming more independent of the other two BES islands. There is some progress in here visible. The national government approaches the BES islands nowadays with 'less for less and more for more' under the condition that good governance and financial accountability are guaranteed at an adequate level. Saba has been complying with these conditions for years. Second, the taken responsibility of the public entity of Saba before and after the hurricane season of 2017 was also rewarded by the national government. They received financial aid from the national government to improve an independent and more sustainable waste management without the condition of reporting directly every dollar spend. This is differently for St. Maarten.

For St. Maarten, being an autonomous country, the financial support of the Netherlands as a kingdom partner is less self-evident. During the aftermath of hurricane Irma and Maria, there was a firm discussion what the role of the Dutch government should be. Shortly after, it was announced that a fund would be made available for St. Maarten, managed by the WB. While the fund was made available, it was questioned if the Dutch government and the WB could intervene on autonomous matters. The WB has set some conditions which enforce a sustainable rebuilding of St. Maarten, which touches upon autonomous affairs. Second, after the hurricane, the problem of waste has grown enormously on St. Maarten and is framed as one of the “emergency projects” by the Dutch government where St. Maarten need to work on with the money made available. Although it can be argued that the Dutch government intervenes on an autonomous affair, this research has shown that it is questionable if the problem of the landfill on St. Maarten can still be seen as such since it forms a health threat for the citizens of St. Maarten. The problem of waste invites us to redefine the environmental scope, linking the environment to health. On Saba, this is already acknowledged where the public health department brings in expertise on the waste management (G_2SA). On St. Maarten, the waste management is part of the Ministry of VROMI. Due to this, the *slager keurt zijn eigen vlees* (the butcher judges his own meat) (G_5SXM). Framing the landfill problem as violation of human rights because of a poisoned living environment and a lack of good governance because of the political instability, the Dutch government should intervene in this area to solve the problem of the landfill as a kingdom affair.

The Dutch government does not approach the landfill as a kingdom responsibility (yet) and expects that the government of St. Maarten feels urgency to solve this problem of the landfill. It remains the responsibility of the government of St. Maarten, although the decisions made by the government of St. Maarten need to be in line with the conditions of the Dutch government and the WB. The taken responsibility of the Dutch government in providing financial aid goes hand in hand with a decrease of the political autonomy of St. Maarten because of the set conditions. Second, the Dutch government supervises the budget sharply, where St. Maarten needs to report where the money will be spent on.

In answering the research question, there is a paradox found. Saba, integrated in the European Netherlands, with therefore less sovereignty, is negotiating more autonomy for itself because of the compliance with good governance and financial accountability. St. Maarten, on the other hand, is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and has therefore more degree of sovereignty. However, because the country has an unstable political situation and the government of St. Maarten is not financial accountable according to the Dutch government, the island is being tethered more firmly back.

7. DISCUSSION

In this final chapter the assembled empirical data about the practice of sovereignty and responsibility with regard to waste governance during the aftermath of hurricane season of 2017 on two Dutch Caribbean islands and the theoretical data from the second chapter will be brought together.

In my theoretical framework, I first described different forms of sovereignty such as state sovereignty (Prinsen, Blaisse 2017), political sovereignty (Oostindie, Veenendaal 2017; Bonilla 2017) and environmental sovereignty (Litfin 1993). With regard to state sovereignty the Kingdom is one sovereign state. Within this sovereign state, different governmental arrangements make the Kingdom a transatlantic state with one country located on European territory and three countries and three special municipalities located in the Caribbean. The practice of these different governmental arrangements touches upon the political sovereignty of these Dutch Caribbean islands because of kingdom affairs as described in the Charter of the Kingdom. The Charter defines that all four countries within the Kingdom are political equal. However, history has shown that this equal position is fiction and that the government of the European Netherlands is dominant. Still, the three countries and three municipalities located in the Caribbean are rejecting full political and state sovereignty. Regarding to environmental sovereignty, where sovereignty nowadays means the participation on the international level with signing environmental agreements, the Kingdom is also presenting the non-sovereign territories. Since the Kingdom is dominated by the European Netherlands government, the political environmental sovereignty of the Caribbean islands is decreased.

This does not mean that the different Dutch Caribbean islands do not negotiate interdependencies and autonomy. Scholars describe this as a third category of sovereignty where full sovereignty is rejected but the islands have some forms of political sovereignty on affairs that are not labelled as a kingdom affair (although the signing of international environmental agreements touch upon internal affairs for the islands as well). The political sovereignty of the islands is therefore mostly internal. To execute this form of internal political sovereignty, capacity is needed. As the

research shows, the availability of capacity is lacking on both islands to properly implement local, national and international environmental legislation. The capacity of the government of St. Maarten is lacking due to instability, the non-availability of knowledge, financial resources and institutional capacity. Although having a stable political situation, the lack of available financial resources and capacity is also present on Saba. The lacking capacities are partly covered by the active NGOs on both islands, although they are facing difficulties with capacity as well. During the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, waste governance shows the importance of available financial resources to implement a proper waste management. However, there is more at play than the lack of available resources, which cannot be seen independent from political and power struggles. The stories of the islands frame the practice of sovereignty during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017 as a matter of rewards of good behavior which influences their financial sovereignty. The financial sovereignty expresses the autonomy on decision-making and the dependency on available funds. The funds made available during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017 came with some conditions that touch upon the decision-making authority where the money is spend on as well as how the money is spend. In other words, the islands need to report about their financial expenses and therefore remain dependent. Since the government of the European Netherlands finds that Saba is complying with the conditions of good governance and financial accountability, they have received more trust, and therefore more autonomy, in reporting how the money is spent. St. Maarten on the other hand, although being autonomous, is because of strong financial dependence to rebuild the island more attached to the metropole state, with the assistance of the WB, where the relationship between the two governments is marked with suspicion and control.

The practice of responsibility is highly debated within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in this research due to the scope of an environmental problem and again due to available (financial) resources. In my theoretical framework, I have debated the concept of postcolonial responsibility. The aspect of (post)colonialism frames citizens living in 'faraway' countries as 'distant others'. In the case of the transatlantic Kingdom this is problematic as all the citizens have the same passport and are therefore not 'others', although living far away from the European Netherlands. Within this transatlantic Kingdom, different policy and legislation with

regard to waste governance have been formed by the different governments before and during the aftermath of hurricane season of 2017. However, the legislation and conditions made by the government of the European Netherlands is not conform the characteristics of the islands. For Saba, being part of the BES islands, the law VROM BES does not fit the characteristics of Saba, because of conflicts with local ordinances and the lack of resources for execution. Although the BES islands are more and more individual approached, the practice of distance into difference is still visible. During the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, Saba cannot make a claim on the national disaster fund because hazards such as hurricanes are not covered in this fund. For St. Maarten, the government of the island argues that the conditions to make use of the fund are hard to comply with because of a lack of institutional capacity. Assigning responsibility from the government of the European Netherlands to the governments of the Dutch Caribbean islands is right when the resources needed are available.

As argued in my theoretical framework, the assignment of responsibility can be based on blameworthiness, and therefore backward knowledge. The European Netherlands has colonized the islands which has influenced their development. Nowadays, this country is a wealthy country where the knowledge and capacity to implement a proper waste management for the European territory is there, so why not for the islands of Saba and St. Maarten? The government of the European Netherlands states that Dutch knowledge, technology and policy experience offer solutions for problems elsewhere (such as a proper waste management) and can contribute to an accelerated reduction of waste of raw materials. With this, the Netherlands not only offers solutions for international sustainability issues, but can also strengthen the position of the Netherlands as a leader on the international scene (Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Watermanagement 2017).

It is remarkable that the Netherlands wants to have such a strong leading international role in waste management while islands that belong to the Kingdom really suffer from inadequate waste management. History has shown how the government of the European Netherlands does not include the islands in maintaining their international position and image because it might harm the autonomy of the islands. Now, during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, the problem of

waste governance on the island has the attention of the politicians in the European Netherlands. This attention, which leads to providing funds and thus some form of responsibility, can be framed as a backward-looking responsibility, answering to events instead of preventing these events from happening. The lack of a proper waste management already occurred a threat to the citizens of the islands of Saba and St. Maarten. Second, the funds that are made available for implementing a proper waste management on both islands are project based. History has shown how this does not lead to a sustainable implementation. When all the money from the fund is used, there are no available resources for a continuation of proper execution. In achieving a sustainable solution, there is a forward-looking responsibility and political will needed. First of all, to make fund, capacity and expertise available. Second, after making these resources available it should envision a long-term approach to stimulate the safety of all Dutch citizens.

The aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017 challenges this third path of non-sovereignty where the different governments within the Kingdom are not in dialogue but in heated power and political struggles. The research shows how Saba manages the dialogue in a more successful way and therefore receives more for more. On St. Maarten, the discussion about autonomy seems to take the upper hand instead of remaining in dialogue as kingdom partners. The title of this study is 'never waste a good crisis', framing the crisis as encouragement for a cooperation between the different Dutch Caribbean islands and the European territory of the Kingdom where a long term and forward-looking responsibility should be taken so that money is not wasted only on backward-looking responsibility and short-term projects.

With the changing climate, where these Dutch Caribbean islands stand out to be more vulnerable, this approach is not a luxury but a needed change in the governance of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Starting to solve the problem of waste could be a good start. Proper waste management can increase environmental performance and reduce factors that increase a changing climate.

Limitations, reflections and suggestions for future research

The six Dutch Caribbean islands are all very different with regard to their characteristics. Choosing two of them was really needed for the time I had. Although both cases I've chosen show clearly some similarities as explained on page 44, they also possess some differences. Some of the people I spoke to framed Saba as St. Maarten sixty years ago. Sixty years ago, St. Maarten had far less citizens and the building infrastructure was not that much developed yet. Different legislation was needed at that time. An example is the sewage. On Saba, something as a sewage system does not exist. It goes straight from the house into the ground. For St. Maarten, this was also the case. However, with the high population and building infrastructure it has now, a proper sewage system is nowadays needed to protect the environment. What does this say about comparing two islands that are, according to my respondents, not on the same level of development? I have considered this question during my fieldwork. When I arrived on Saba, it became clear to me that although being far smaller and more presented by green lush hills, the comparison of these two islands is relevant, maybe even because of these differences. Being a small remote island as Saba with an enormous social control and good relationship with the government of the European Netherlands, made the characteristics of St. Maarten even more visible and the importance of developing and executing legislation to protect the environment and life of citizens on St. Maarten. Second, the littering of waste is maybe less visible on Saba because of the green hills, walking around on this island does reveal littered waste in nature. Both islands need to find a sustainable solution to their waste problem to strengthen their one-pillar based economy tourism. To combat the threat of a changing climate, the cooperation with the government of the European Netherlands needs to be stable and effective. The governance approach within the Kingdom of these similar but also different islands can show the shortcomings of the different governments involved.

During the development of my fieldwork and research, I was lucky to have experts of the region around me during my internship, which both came from the region as well as Dutch scholars. Following the introduction course about the Caribbean region also provided a lot of useful insights. However, this also influenced my perception of the islands, which was strengthened by the news presented in the Dutch media.

Traveling to the region really added an extra value to the research, where the distance between researcher and researched has become less. Talking about how distance turns into difference can also be said about the position of the researcher. Before heading into the field, my knowledge was, despite different actions to diverse my gained knowledge, desk-research based as well as Western based. Arriving at the islands of St. Maarten and Saba revealed a lot of different perceptions or explanations why some things are as they are. For example, the insular characteristics and transformation of being an autonomous country as well as a special municipality became highly visible. Also, seeing the importance of the environment, and the environmental degradation that is happening now, has strengthened the urgency of the problem.

During my fieldwork, asking questions to different stakeholders about the legacies of two horrifying events, namely colonialism and the hurricane season of 2017, could trigger unpleasant feelings which might have influence their response. Especially the change of types of question, when not asking about these events but a more neutral question, heated feelings still could have influenced these answers. Furthermore, when things are not going well on the islands, the approach of the government of the European Netherlands towards the islands is doing research about events that have happened. Different people I spoke to are sick of people coming from the European Netherlands, doing research and concluding the same over and over again or bringing no solution to the problem because that might harm the autonomy of the islands. Or, even worse, they execute some actions without consultation of the local stakeholders. While doing research on the islands, I explicitly mentioned that I'm a student, not working for the government or consultancy bureau and doing this research as a final project of my master studies and out of my own interest.

As mentioned before, due to limited time, I had to choose two cases in making my argument. However, other interesting options are there. St. Eustatius is another BES island in the hurricane belt in the Caribbean region. Their relationship with the government of the European Netherlands is severe and the national government has taken over to govern the island. With the approach of 'less for less and more for more' a case study between Saba and St. Eustatius during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017 can reveal interesting governance approaches. Second,

on Bonaire, the BES island not located in the hurricane belt but located 900 km to the south hosts RCN. Another interesting case could be how the presence of the Dutch involvement on this island changes the concept of distance into difference compared to Saba and/or St. Eustatius.

Extending the discussion of the practice of sovereignty outside the Kingdom of the Netherlands could also be interesting. All the three Dutch Caribbean Leeward islands are not fully sovereign as they are located within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. How reveals (financial) aid, given during the aftermath of the hurricane season of 2017, the benefits of being not fully sovereign? This can be done in comparing St. Maarten with Puerto Rico, which is an unincorporated territory of the United States, who suffered badly from hurricane Maria. Or, discovering the importance of participation on an international level, comparing a Dutch Caribbean Leeward island with a fully sovereign island such as Dominica which was heavily affected by hurricane Maria. Last but not least, the island of St. Maarten is shared with the French territory of Saint Martin. Both parts of the islands were heavily destroyed during the hurricane season of 2017. Comparing these two cases can reveal an interesting case of cross-border governance since both parts of the islands are integrated within two European Union member states although both having different governmental arrangements with the metropole state. Especially looking at waste governance, further research is highly advisable since both parts of the islands have a totally different way of collecting waste. On the French side, recycling is implemented and citizens have to pay for their waste. On the Dutch side, offering waste is free and dumped at the landfill without any separation. Sharing one island without border control, how come that this small island with two territories have such a different waste governance and even more remarkable, no shared waste governance?

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APPENDIX 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ST. MAARTEN

How long are you in your function?

With which environmental policies and legislation do you work in your daily life?

Are there any international agreements that you work with or influence your work?

Do you notice any differences with regard to environmental protection before and after 10-10-10?

How do you see the role of the government in taking responsibility for the environment?

Where are the priorities set within the government with regard to environmental protection?

How does the financial budget for the environment and waste governance looks like?

How was the response of your department before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

What is your opinion of the response of the Dutch government before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

How do you see the cooperation between the government of St. Maarten, the Dutch government and the World Bank during the aftermath of hurricane season 2017?

What is your opinion about the environment as an autonomous affair? Has the hurricane season of 2017 influenced this opinion?

APPENDIX 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR THE NGOS ON ST. MAARTEN

How long are you in your function?

With which environmental policies and legislation do you work in your daily life?

Are there any international agreements that you work with or influence your work?

Do you notice any differences with regard to environmental protection before and after 10-10-10?

How do you see the role of the government in taking responsibility for the environment?

How do you see the role of your organization in taking responsibility for the environment?

How does your financial budget to carry out your activities look like?

How was the response of your organization before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

What is your opinion of the response of the Dutch government before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

How do you see the cooperation between the government of St. Maarten, the Dutch government and the World Bank during the aftermath of hurricane season 2017?

How do you see the role of your organization within rebuilding the island in the aftermath of hurricane season 2017?

What is your opinion about the environment as an autonomous affair? Has the hurricane season of 2017 influenced this opinion?

APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR THE PUBLIC ENTITY OF SABA

How long are you in your function?

With which environmental policies and legislation do you work in your daily life?

Are there any international agreements that you work with or influence your work?

Do you notice any differences with regard to environmental protection before and after 10-10-10?

How do you see the role of the local government in taking responsibility for the environment?

Where are the priorities set within the local government with regard to environmental protection?

How does the financial budget for the environment and waste governance looks like?

Has the financial budget for the environment and waste governance changed after 10-10-10?

How do you see the role of the national government in taking responsibility for the environment?

How was the response of your department before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

What is your opinion of the response of the national government before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

How do you see the cooperation between the local and national government during the aftermath of hurricane season 2017?

APPENDIX 4: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR THE NGOS ON SABA

How long are you in your function?

With which environmental policies and legislation do you work in your daily life?

Are there any international agreements that you work with or influence your work?

Do you notice any differences with regard to environmental protection before and after 10-10-10?

How do you see the role of the local government in taking responsibility for the environment?

How do you see the role of your organization in taking responsibility for the environment?

How does your financial budget to carry out your activities look like?

Has this budget changed after 10-10-10?

How do you see the role of the national government in taking responsibility for the environment?

How was the response of your organization before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

What is your opinion of the response of the national government before and after the hurricanes Irma and Maria?

How do you see the cooperation between the local and national government during the aftermath of hurricane season 2017?

How do you see the role of your organization within rebuilding the island in the aftermath of hurricane season 2017?