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# DISASTER GOVERNANCE ON ST. MAARTEN

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A study on how disaster governance in combination with St. Maarten's development affected the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma



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MSc Thesis Sociology of Development and Change

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Wageningen University - Department of Social Sciences

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## Abstract

With the increase in visibility and frequency of disasters, governments have developed more agencies, focussing on managing such disastrous events. These agencies – apparatuses – aim to protect and foster human populations. This governmental concern over the human population is identified by Michel Foucault as biopolitical. The existence of such agencies and accompanied sets of measures does, however, not simply imply that potential impacts of disaster can be reduced. The functioning of these agencies is related to the overall strength of the governance system in which it operates. If an overall governance system is considered weak, as often the case in less-developed countries, then the potential for severe disaster impacts is considerably higher. This thesis therefore highlights, that when analysing the functioning of a disaster management structure in the wake of a disaster, looking into historical forces influencing this structure should be considered. Consequently, this thesis focusses on St. Maarten, which was hit by a major hurricane – named Irma – in 2017. Building on interviews, literature and observations, this thesis argues that a certain form of governmentality on St. Maarten in the aftermath of Irma has led to a situation in which community members have not experienced (much) support from governmental institutions. It is executing a biopolitical response through the development of certain apparatuses, as these classify the population into groups who may or may not receive help. This is eventually contributing to the increase in vulnerable situations on St. Maarten.

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**Key words:** disaster governance, disaster politics, governmentality, biopolitics



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## List of Abbreviations

**BBB:** Building Back Better

**COPI:** Commando Plaats Incident

**DCNA:** Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance

**DCOMM:** Department of communication

**EOC:** Emergency Operation Centre

**ESF:** Emergency Support Function

**GEBE:** St. Maarten Water and Energy Service Company

**IRC:** Interim Recovery Committee

**NAf:** Netherlands Antilles Guilder

**NDMP:** St. Maarten's National Disaster Management Plan

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisations

**NRPB:** National Recovery Program Bureau

**NRRP:** National Recovery and Resilience Plan

**PM:** Prime Minister

**SXM:** Sint-Maarten

**TeleM:** Bureau Telecommunication and Post

**UN:** United Nations

**USAR:** Dutch Urban Search and Rescue Team

**VNG:** Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten

**VROMI:** Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure

**VSA:** Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour

**WB:** World Bank

**WIC:** West Indian Compagnie

**W-NRP:** National Recovery Plan Workgroup

# 1. Introduction

Where disasters were first perceived as acts of God – leaving it out of the realm of human control and alteration – they are now perceived as being inside this realm, making it possible for humans to modify and control them (Olson, 2000). Likewise, this means that communities and societies are holding leaders responsible for not only the management of such disasters – through response, recovery and reconstruction programs – but also for mitigation and preparedness activities. Therefore, with the increase in frequency and visibility of disasters, governments have developed more agencies, in order to manage such disastrous events (Olson, 2000). These agencies – such as a disaster management agency – are focussing on protecting and fostering the human population, by reducing the risks opposing them. Such fostering of human populations has also been described by Foucault (Foucault, 1991). He describes that in order to sustain life, life and its many forms need to be studied, ordered and classified, in order to decide whom to correct and whom to punish. Foucault named this governmental concern of human populations *biopolitics* and named such agencies focussing on this concern *apparatuses* or *dispositifs*.

However, the existence of such agencies and accompanied sets of measures does not simply imply that potential impacts of disaster can be reduced. As Tierney asserts, the functioning of such agencies is related to the overall strength of the governance system in which it operates (2012). If an overall governance system is considered weak, as often the case in less-developed countries, then the potential for severe disaster impacts is considerably higher. Disaster vulnerability is thus not only related to the strength of a disaster, but also to the presence of certain governance conditions such as “corruption, lack of respect for the rule of law, weak environmental regulations, and lack of meaningful public participation in decision making” (2012, p. 346). Providing the case of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Tierney highlights that historical forces – resulting in poverty, environmental degradation, and unregulated growth – together with the inability to put in place effective disaster risk measurements, resulted in a large amount of damage.

Therefore, this thesis tries to highlight that when analysing the functioning of a disaster management structure in the wake of a disaster, looking into historical forces influencing this structure should be considered. Consequently, this thesis focusses on St. Maarten, which was hit by a major hurricane in 2017. St. Maarten is an island located within the northeast Caribbean Sea and is located within the Leeuward Islands Archipelago. The 87 km<sup>2</sup> island is divided up into two parts. The Northern part is an overseas department of France (Collectivité de Saint-Martin) of around 53 km<sup>2</sup>. The Southern part is an autonomous country – named St. Maarten – within the Kingdom of the Netherlands covering around 34 km<sup>2</sup>. The Dutch part of the island is the study area of this thesis. Together with many other Caribbean islands (e.g. St. Kitts and Nevis, Aruba, Puerto Rico), St. Maarten’s main economic activity takes place in the tourism sector. Overall around 85% of all national revenues originates from the tourism sector (Government of St. Maarten, 2018). As a result, many of the estimated 40.000 inhabitants

are working within this sector. This is however an estimation, since precise numbers are lacking, and as many undocumented migrants are living and working on St. Maarten.

However as mentioned, St. Maarten was hit by a major hurricane – named Irma – in 2017. Irma started on the 30th of August 2017 as a tropical storm and developed into a hurricane nearby the Republic of Cabo Verde, an archipelago within the central Atlantic Ocean. Irma progressed rapidly after one day into a category three hurricane and later into a category five hurricane on the 4th of September. Two days later, on the 6th, Irma reached Antigua and Barbuda and later that day it reached the island of St. Maarten, causing tremendous damage. It destroyed over 70% of the infrastructure on the southern Dutch side and the Dutch Red Cross estimated that in total over 90% of the infrastructure had been damaged. Many inhabitants of the island lost their homes or parts thereof were badly damaged (e.g. roofs). The total damage was estimated around 2.7 billion US dollars (Government of St. Maarten, 2018). The budget of the government however experienced a drop, as it was estimated that it would have a shortfall of around 87 million US dollars (W-NRP, 2017). It was estimated that the original budget in 2018 was around 268 million US dollars, but the post-Irma estimation was decreased to around 180 million US dollars. The main reason for this shortfall is related to the tremendous decrease of the income of the government through taxes, especially related to the tourism industry.

As a result of this, the Dutch government made a budget of around 600 million US dollars available to speed up recovery processes. They however posed two criteria to the government of St. Maarten in order to receive the fund. One was that the Dutch government would temporarily be in charge of the border control on the island between the French and Dutch side, and the second criteria was that there should be an anti-corruption body which would have the power to investigate any integrity violations and which should be able to give binding advices to the government of St. Maarten. This last criterion has been a point of debate for many years, as the Dutch government desires to install this in order to tackle issues regarding political integrity and corruption. It took however over seven months before an agreement was found between both governments, eventually resulting into the development of a trust fund construction. Additionally, the World Bank got involved into the agreement as well, as they were given the task of managing the fund. This construction is focussing on developing and executing projects aimed at restoring and recovering St. Maarten. However, this construction resulted in certain implications (e.g. delay) regarding the execution of these projects. These implications are affecting the effectivity of the projects and are hindering the recovery processes. As a result, many people on St. Maarten have not experienced receiving much help originating from the trust fund. So even though it has been one and half year after Irma, many houses still have a tarp as a replacement for their roof. This is making these and the inhabitants therefore vulnerable to any new disasters or hurricanes which could approach the island.

Therefore, this research aims at understanding and attempts to shed light on how disaster governance, in combination with St. Maarten's development, had an effect on the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma. Consequently, the following research questions were developed;

## **Main research question**

*How has disaster governance in combination with St. Maarten's development affected disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma?*

## **Sub research questions**

1. *What different factors have shaped development on St. Maarten? And how have these influenced the vulnerability level?*
2. *What characterises disaster governance in St. Maarten?*
3. *Why has disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma been disjointed?*
4. *How do different groups on the island understand efforts to relieve vulnerability or increase resilience?*

## **Reading guide**

This thesis follows the following structure. Chapter two highlights an historical analysis on how St. Maarten developed over time and what factors have shaped this development. The third chapter presents the theoretical framework used within this thesis. It explains where this research fits within the theoretical debate and how certain concepts are linked and connected. Chapter four contains a description of the different methodologies used within this research. It links the research questions with the methodologies and clarifies these in detail. The fifth chapter highlights a reflection on the response of different involved organisations in the aftermath of Irma. Within this chapter the organisational disaster management structure on St. Maarten, the functioning of this structure during/after Irma and the trust fund governance structure (and its implications) are discussed. Chapter six will further discuss these implications, and how community members have experienced the different efforts on decreasing the level of vulnerability. The seventh chapter will then present the discussion, linking the case study to the theoretical framework. Finally, the eighth and final chapter contains the conclusion, answering the research questions.

## **2. Background information**

### ***2.1 Island till the discovery of Columbus***

Before its discovery by European nations, St. Maarten had been inhabited for many years. The first people who settled on the island were a group of indigenous people named the Arawak Indians. This tribe of Arawaks left their homeland situated in the Orinoco basin in South-America to travel north along the Caribbean islands, eventually settling on St. Maarten around the year 550 BC (J. Hartog, 1981). These people were living peacefully on the island, naming it ‘Sualouiga’ or ‘The land of Salt’, and they brought several agricultural and pottery practices with them (J. Hartog, 1981). This however changed when a tribe of Carib Indians came down from North America in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. These people were an aggressive and cannibalistic tribe, who enslaved most of the Arawak woman and killed most of the Arawak men (J. Hartog, 1981). By the time the European nations came into the Caribbean region, most of the Arawaks were either killed or enslaved by the Caribs. One of the first nations encountering these tribes were the Spanish. They named them *Indios* (Indians) but after they realized that these communities were different from each other. Most of these communities were either enslaved or killed during the Spanish conquest and most of the Caribbean land and islands were colonized (Alofs et al., 1997).

### ***2.2 Island after the discovery of Columbus***

The first sighting of the island was reported by Christopher Columbus in 1493. During his 1492-1494 voyage Christopher Columbus ‘discovered’ multiple Caribbean islands, possibly including the sighting of St. Maarten on 11 November 1493. The island was initially named Isla de San Martín after St. Martin the bishop of Tours, as the 11<sup>th</sup> of November is the feast day named after him (DCNA, 2006). Although Columbus claimed it as a Spanish territory, he never landed on the island itself. Even though many Caribbean islands were occupied during the 15<sup>th</sup> century by various European nations such as Spain, England and France, St. Maarten was considered not being of importance and remained unoccupied by any of these nations. This however changed in 1624 when the first Dutchmen set foot on the island, and in the years that followed the island became of importance due to the presence of salt ponds which could be used for the preservation of food. The Dutch explored the island from 1624 up until 1631 when a small group of Dutchmen claimed the island for the West-Indische Compagnie or West India Compagnie (WIC) (DCNA, 2006). The island became of importance for the WIC due to the earlier mentioned salt ponds. These salt ponds were of interest due to the fact that salt was the most important preservative. As a result, the salt extraction industry experienced an immediate upscaling. This took place however only until 1633, as the Spanish gained control over the island by conquering it from the Dutch. The Dutch regained control of the island as a result of the peace signing of Münster in 1648. This resulted in the Spanish leaving the island as they considered the island not being of much use (Renkema, 2016). After the departure of the Spanish, the French (who previously settled on St. Maarten in 1629) and the

Dutch settled again simultaneously on the island. The Dutch coming from the island of St. Eustatius and the French coming from the island of St. Kitts. After a few minor conflicts, and the realization from both nations that neither would gain profits of the island easily, the two nations signed the Treaty of Concordia in 1648, resulting in the division of the island (Renkema, 2016). This division split the island into a French and Dutch part (see figure 1), of which the French part is located on the Northern side (53 km<sup>2</sup>) and the Dutch side is located on



Figure 1 Map of St. Maarten (Wikipedia, 2018)

the Southern side (37 km<sup>2</sup>). Although this treaty was created and signed in 1648, it was frequently violated by both parties. Hartog describes several occasions in which the treaty was repeatedly violated. These events varied from the Dutch occupying Marigot from 1793 till 1795 to the French controlling the entire island from 1781 till 1784 (1981, p. 40). It was only till 1817 that the final borders on the island were set and that occurrence of these incidents was stopped.

After the division in 1648 several crops were introduced, such as sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, indigo and coffee. The introduction of these crops resulted in the expansion of trading activities on the island (DCNA, 2006). As described above, the French and Dutch had many incidents which changed the division of the land. However, the English also started to show more interest. This resulted in the island frequently changing hands between the French, Dutch and English. By the year 1817 it had changed hands sixteen times, however this was the year that the Dutch and French established lasting control over the island by finalizing the borders of the treaty (DCNA, 2006). As a result of this the sugarcane and salt extraction activities became more of importance again, especially for the Dutch side. However, after the abolition of slavery, the sugarcane plantation vanished. This made space for a small scale land tenure economy, in which the inhabitants of the island were cultivating their own food necessities (Renkema, 2016). Within this situation the salt ponds provided these people a small extra income, however this was not a stable income due to market fluctuations. Therefore, a part of the population migrated for several months per year to the islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico & the Dominican Republic, in which they could work in the sugarcane industry. Through the late 1800s and 1900s the industry on St. Maarten declined resulting in the decline of the salt extraction processes and remaining plantations (Renkema, 2016), eventually leading to the closure of the sugarcane production in 1875 and salt production in the 1940s. At the beginning of the 20th century many more people migrated permanently from the island to destinations varying from Aruba, Curacao, United States, and neighbouring islands. They moved there in order to find more low-skilled jobs, as these were difficult to find on St. Maarten. An example of this is that many St. Maarteners moved to Aruba and Curaçao to work at oil refineries. People who remained on St. Maarten gradually returned back to agricultural and

fishing practices, and agricultural became the most important economic activity on the island (Renkema, 2016; Rojer, 1997).

As a result of these migration flows, the population of St. Maarten changed drastically. In 1920 there were only around 2,600 people living on the island, 2,335 in 1930 and in 1950 only 1,484 people (Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016). Due to these migration flows, the island became dependent on subsidies from The Netherlands and from remittances from migrants who left to seek work elsewhere (Keur & Keur, 1960; Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016). This changed however from the 1950s, due to the development of the tourism industry. This will be explained more in detail down below.

### ***2.3 Development of tourism 1950s-present***

Since the 1950s tourism started develop on St. Maarten, of which Lowes (1977) gives a description. She describes how the island started to shift from the earlier mentioned economic activities towards the tourism industry. Until this time the inhabitants were making a living by fishing and trading with people from neighbouring islands, such as St. Eustatius, Anguilla, St. Kitts, Nevis. These activities were supplemented by social welfare contributions from the Dutch government and with money transfer from relatives working on Aruba and Curaçao (Keur & Keur, 1960). This however changed in the following years as the tourism sector started to increase. This development fitted within developments in the wider Caribbean region as tourism gained a central place among Caribbean economies. It replaced earlier colonial products such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, and became the most important element of economic growth in the region (Padilla & McElroy, 2007).

So, in the 1950s tourism started to take off on St. Maarten. One of the first hotels – the Little Bay Hotel – was built on the island in the year 1955 and it was followed by the construction of luxury villas in the beginning of the 1960s, attracting the first of many tourists. These constructions were made possible through so called ‘gatekeepers’. These are people who have the control to decide who gets access to particular resources or opportunities, and more importantly who does not. They had an important role in how tourism developed. Roitman & Veenendaal, when describing the origins of oligarchic politics in St. Maarten, highlighted this role as the following;

*“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 were thus in a prime position to be gatekeepers.” (2016, p. 76)*

They described how oligarchic politics developed on the island between 1800 and 1970 and how this very much related to the migration patterns. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the gatekeeper position was mainly held by certain family dynasties, of which the van Romondt family was an important player. They came to the island at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gained much land and property, as



certain estate lands were up for sale cheaply due to an economic decline and due to the fact that many people were selling their properties and leaving the island. So they managed to control most of the land on the island in the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then gained several positions in governmental and administrative positions as there were not many people considered qualified present on the island (Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016). This however changed in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as there was an out-migration flow occurring as a result of the earlier mentioned reasons<sup>1</sup>. Due to this flow the family lost its gatekeeper position. Roitman & Veenendaal described it as the following;

*“Their gradual disappearance from St. Maarten was connected to the small-scale of the island - a small scale that, ironically, had helped the family gain prominence - and, in turn, helped to dictate a pattern of migration to and from the island.”*(2016, p. 77)

By the year 1948 the family sold their last property and the name vanished from the island. This development opened up opportunities for people who remained there while many others migrated to neighbouring islands. As described by Roitman & Veenendaal;

*“The out-migration was beneficial to the people who stayed. Opportunities opened up to step into gatekeeping functions and, thereby, build up or extend political and economic power in the mid-1950s”* (2016, p. 79).

Different people who stayed managed to profit from the situation and therefore managed to gain these gatekeepers roles. One of these was Claude Wathey who, together with other local business leaders, made use of the opportunity to promote tourism on the island. Watheys father was a successful businessman who owned the franchise of Shell, the dealership for General Motors, opened a grocery store and was involved in insurance and shipping (Badejo, 1989). As a result, Wathey had the (financial) capacity to make use of the opportunity and to gain a role of a gatekeeper. This role became even more of importance within the development of the new tourism sector. This was because much of the ‘best’ land on the island was controlled by the government, who played an important role. Any hotel developer which wanted to move onto St. Maarten but did not have the financial capacity to acquire private land had to obtain it through gatekeepers such as Claude Wathey (Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016). The development of these hotels and villas together with the establishment of a New-York tourism office by the Netherlands Antilles government, promoting tourism in all of the Netherlands Antilles (including St. Maarten) resulted in an increase of the tourism sector. As a result, tourism became the leading growth sector in the islands’ economy, as was the case in several Caribbean islands. The previous economic activities (e.g. fishing, trading) stagnated since most inhabitants started to focus on the new uprising

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<sup>1</sup> See sub-chapter Island after the discovery of Columbus for detailed explanation

market (Zappino, 2005). Simultaneously within the same period, Castro's communist regime withdrew Cuba as an tourist destination for Americans (Padilla & McElroy, 2007). Therefore the establishment of the tourism office, founded by Claude Wathey, created the opportunity to present St. Maarten as an alternative tourist destination to US citizens seeking a new holiday destination (Winkel, Winkel, & van Ditzhuijzen, 2004). De Albuquerque & McElroy described however that it took until the 1970s until St. Maarten's tourism development really took off (1995, p. 77). They describe how the construction of a resort in 1970 can be seen as a turning point;

*"The construction of the 600 room Mullet Bay Resort in 1969/1970 represented a decisive turning-point in orienting the island's small scale, informal, and loosely organised tourism industry onto a new growth trajectory"* (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1995, p. 78).

These developments resulted in the fact that tourism on St. Maarten gained a boost and became more of importance for its economy. More and more tourism related infrastructure was built, however this occurred not without any issues and related problems. By the end of the 1970s, the pace in which the hotels and villas were built could be considered as dangerous and carelessly fast, eventually resulting in the 1980s being a 'virtual free-for-all' time in tourism construction (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1995). Both public and private sectors invested heavily in the tourism industry. Companies and people were lured to the island by offering them certain concessions (e.g. subsidies on water and electricity) and by generous tax breaks. As a result of this free for all period a construction boom occurred in which many tourism related buildings were built. Within this boom building codes were not enforced, permitting processes were neglected and reasonable planning on the island disappeared (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1995; Rojer, 1997). These issues could be linked to the accountability and integrity of St. Maarten's politics and government, as these were associated to certain extents of corruption (these matters of corruption will however be explained later in more detail). Pattullo quotes John Bell, Executive Vice-President of the Caribbean Hotel Association, on these issues;

*"Unbridled growth and lack of long-term planning had had a negative effect. The island, he said, has been 'inundated with the type of tourism which perhaps is not what you have wanted .... A slower rate of growth could have allowed the infrastructure to have kept pace with that superstructure"* (1996, p. 35).

Despite all the construction, the investments of the government regarding the public infrastructure have not kept up with the demand of the developing tourism sector. This therefore created several problems related to traffic. On a busy day with heavy traffic a trip from Philipsburg to Juliana Airport can take around one to one and a half hours, instead of the fifteen minutes it normally takes (de Albuquerque &

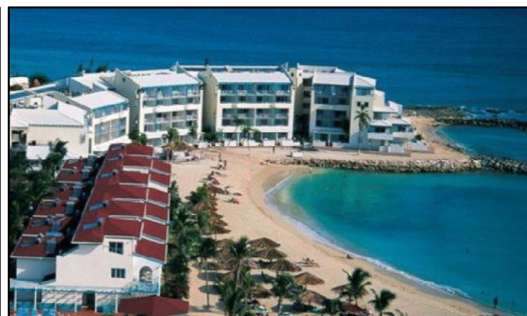
McElroy, 1995). So as highlighted above, the decades from the 70s till the 90s can be considered the 'boom decades' in which intense construction projects transformed St. Maarten (Aymer, 2011).

Another concern related to the 'explosive' growth driven by tourism is connected to migration. As St. Maarten was a regional 'growth pole' in these boom decades, the development of the tourist industry resulted in population growth over time. As mentioned previously, in 1957 there were around 1600 people living on the island. This number rapidly expanded due to the economic increase within the tourism sector. As a result around 33,000 people were living on St. Maarten in the year 1991 to around 40,000 in 2017 (Aymer, 2011; Keur & Keur, 1960; Westerink, 2017). Many St. Maarteners who migrated in earlier years, returned to the island because of tourism development (Lowes, 1977). Also migrant labourers came from the islands of Curaçao and Aruba, who could enter St. Maarten freely (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1995). The return of many St. Maarteners in combination with the labourers coming in from Curaçao and Aruba were however soon too few to meet the demand, resulting in the migration of labour from other islands, such as Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Inhabitants from neighbouring islands were settling on the island both in a legal and illegal way (Renkema, 2016). St. Maarten's immigration policy and law were however not designed to regulated this migration flow (Aymer, 2011). This therefore resulted in many immigrants coming and settling on the island. A population estimation from 1992 estimated that 30.4% of the population was born on St. Maarten and 13.5% on other islands in the Netherlands Antilles. The other 56.1% was not born on St. Maarten (Aymer, 2011). Many of these immigrants are working in St. Maarten's tourism economy and most often without legal status. These people are living on 'margins of the island economy and society' (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1995, p. 83). As a result of this illegal migration flow the overall vulnerability of St. Maarten has increased. Not only their physical exposure – as their houses are mostly located on vulnerable locations and are less quality then formal housing – but additionally also through less access to state-based rights. Both these factors can potentially decrease their resilience, leaving them in a both financial and physical vulnerable position.

Another related issue to the intense construction boom is that of the need for space to host all these new people. To make sure these new inhabitants have a place to live, much of the areas which had previously been used for agricultural practices (mostly valleys) have been released for housing developments. However due to the small size of the island and due to the lack of space within these valleys, the only way to continue these practices was to build upon the hills (Rojer, 1997).



*Figure 3 Houses build upon hills (Own illustration)*



*Figure 2 Hotel located next to a beach (Wikipedia, 2018)*

Effects resulting from these developments vary from the degradation of nature areas to the destruction of habitat areas of certain species present on the island. Many hotels and houses are built next to St. Maarten's beaches as seen in figure 3, affecting the island's fauna. As a result of these developments Nusselder reported that over 80% of the corals next to the coastlines can be regarded as lost due to the growing tourism rates and the increase of urban sprawl (2017). Due to this loss the potential effect of a hurricane could be substantially bigger, as these corals can form a natural barrier for incoming waves. Rojer (1997) identified several threats to the island's biodiversity of which many could be acknowledged being caused by human intervention, varying from the extension of inhabited areas to tourism projects to road construction and pollution. These threats could all be linked to the development of tourism, as is also the case with the pollution. The waste production of the inhabitants and the tourism industry resulted in a waste problem. Some decades ago (around 30 years) a temporary dump was created on pond island, next to Philipsburg. It was created in order to deal with non-liquid waste (e.g. household garbage, etc.). This 'temporary' solution is however still in place as other solutions to the waste problem are still not found (Bijnsdorp, 2018). Within a few decades this dump has grown to a height of over 40 metres and it is now threatening the inhabitants and environment. This because much of the waste (e.g. car tires, etc.) present on the dump contains toxic materials, which is polluting the surrounding Great Pond Lake. This is not only leading into environmental issues but also to certain implications regarding the health of the people living close by the dump (Bijnsdorp, 2018; van Oers, 2018). As a result of the mismanagement regarding the dump situation, many incidents such as fires have occurred which are threatening the health of people living in the surrounding area, which is due to the size of the island a considerable amount. So, the development of tourism affected the level of biodiversity, nature areas and contributed considerable to the waste management problem. Tourism growth has therefore contributed to the overall increase of hazardous and vulnerable circumstances.

## ***2.4 Conclusion***

Gatekeepers have had an important influence on how the island developed over time. Where till the 1950s the island was focussing on the export of colonial products, after this period the focus shifted towards the development of tourism. Gatekeepers played an important role within this development, as they (e.g. Claude Wathey) facilitated the growth of tourism. These gatekeepers also made a profit of this development as they owned most of the land and properties. They also gained multiple governmental positions, making them more powerful. However, as a result of this certain issues arose, such as the construction boom in which legislations were not enforced and in which government investments did not keep up, as the focus was on the growth of tourism. Another issue arising, due to the development of the tourism industry, is related to migration. Tourism attracted a lot of workers willing to be part of the new blooming tourism industry on St. Maarten. However, migration policies were not designed resulting in many immigrants settling illegally. Both these examples show that the government on St. Maarten did not control the transition towards the tourism industry. It can be stated that the government

of St. Maarten could be considered a weak government as it did not control the arising issues. This in combination with role of gatekeeper by the government (officials) created a problem for themselves which they did not manage to control anymore as it began to grow. So, the development of tourism on St. Maarten together with the lack of government investments has led to the creation of several issues and implications related to migration, spatial planning and corruption. These concerns have eventually led to the growth of vulnerable conditions for both the island as for its inhabitants, and in particular the illegal migrations.

## ***2.5 Power on the island***

As mentioned and described in the earlier paragraphs, St. Maarten has been part of different nation states throughout history. After its ‘discovery’ in 1493, the island became part of the Spanish territory but changed in the years from 1493 till 1648 between different European nation states. The different nation states which were fighting over the island were France, England, Spain, and The Netherlands. In 1648 this changed as the treaty of Concordia was signed between France and The Netherlands, dividing the island up between the different nations. This treaty did however not stop the English from attempting to capture it. Eventually the English managed to conquer the French side of the island, bringing in English-speaking slaves. As a result the Dutch language and culture faded into the background, as English became the main language on the island (DCNA, 2006). In the years that followed the island changed hands often between the French, Dutch and English. By the year 1817 the island changed control sixteen times, before the Dutch and French established lasting control, this was also the year in which the treaty of Concordia became final in which the borders were defined (DCNA, 2006). From this year the Dutch side of St. Maarten became a colony of the Netherlands. The effects of these changes in control can still be seen in modern day St. Maarten. One of these being that the official languages are both English and Dutch, of which English is most commonly spoken. This highlights the seemingly thoughtless Dutch policy regarding the shaping of the island(s). This will however further be highlighted.

Simultaneously around this time the van Romondt family gained much power and control on the island, as they managed to gain much land and properties and filled many of the administrative and governmental positions. This family was given this opportunity due to the many earlier administrative changes. By the time this stabilized, and France and the Netherlands took back control, the van Romondts took this opportunity and created a powerful position within administrative and governmental functions. As a result, this family could be seen as one of the first oligarchic families on St. Maarten<sup>2</sup>.

St Maarten’s colonial status ended in 1954 as it became part of the Netherlands Antilles. The Netherlands Antilles was a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It was founded in 1954 as an autonomous successor of the former Dutch colony Curaçao and dependencies and it created an new order in which three autonomous countries together formed a single state (the Kingdom

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<sup>2</sup> See sub-chapter development of tourism from 1950s-present for detailed explanation

of the Netherlands) (Hillebrink, 2007). Hillebrink describes that the formation of this new order can be placed into an ‘international wave of decolonization’;

*“Dutch politics were quite suddenly gripped by the sentiment that overseas possessions were a thing of the past, obviously also inspired by the international wave of decolonization that had decimated the Western empires during the 1950s and 1960s.”* (2007, p. 166)

This wave of decolonization was fuelled by the United Nations Charter, the foundation treaty of the UN. Chapter XI of this Charter – Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories – bounded the colonial powers of 1945 to develop self-government in their territories, and to develop political, economic, social and educational advancement. As a result, the interest of the inhabitants of the colonial territories would be of the first importance. As this Charter made its impact in Dutch politics, the relationship between the Netherlands and its colonies was under pressure. This changing relationship therefore stimulated the negotiations between the parties, potentially resulting in a process of decolonialization. Simultaneously to these events, another colony of the Netherlands – Dutch East Indies – declared itself independent after the Japanese occupation during World War II. There were however some issues with this, as the Dutch government did not allow this to happen at first, as Indonesia used to be a big source of income. Eventually the Netherlands agreed with the independence, but it could be stated that this affair damaged Dutch international prestige. This again fuelled the process of decolonization within the Kingdom. The Netherlands was thus pressured to renegotiate the position of the colonies, however they did not want to recreate a situation as in the Indonesia case. As a result, it eventually led into the creation of the ‘*Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands*’ (Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden), which was signed in 1954 and facilitate the decolonisation of the colonial islands and the creation of the Netherlands Antilles. Where other colonial powers – such as the United Kingdom, Portugal & Belgium – gave direct to constructions in which their colonial territories gained full independence, the Netherlands chose a different construction for its Caribbean colonies. Were Indonesia gained an independent status, the islands of Saba, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, Bonaire, Curaçao and Aruba – all located within the Caribbean region – became part of an autonomous country within the Dutch Kingdom. Within this process the former colony of Suriname gained the same status. However, within the Kingdom a couple of matters – international relations, defence, guarantee of good governance – remained the responsibility of the Kingdom government, which is the Dutch Government. This changed however in the 1970s, as Dutch politics directed towards a full independence of both Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles. This direction was fuelled by arguments as that after period of colonization decolonization should be the next step. This argumentation could however be considered questionable, as the complete decolonization of the autonomous countries would also be of self-interest for the Netherlands. It would mean an end to overseas financing and responsibility, at it would create non-neo-colonial image. Therefore, Suriname became an independent state in 1975, separate from the Kingdom.

The Netherlands Antilles however remained part of the Kingdom, as they did not want to leave it. Reasons being that the inhabitants of the Antilles have the citizenship to travel and settle to the Netherlands and did not want to lose it and that it could be debatable if the Antilles would profit financially when becoming independent. This situation changed however over time, but this will be explained in the following paragraphs.

The government of the Netherlands Antilles was situated in the capital, which was Willemstad (Curaçao). The parliament situated in Willemstad was responsible for the legislation on the different islands which were part of the Netherlands Antilles. The islands however could handle a lot of their own affairs independently as they had a chosen government in place, but for certain subjects they were depending on the central government in Curaçao. The first government in place was led by Claude Wathey who remained in control over the government from 1954 till 1991. He managed to stay in power due to his strong personality and charisma, which was decisive in gaining and maintaining political control on the island. Wathey was – as described previously – an important gatekeeper, as he owned much land and properties. This combination of (chief) landowner and head of the government, resulted in a situation in which gatekeepers (as Wathey) could profit considerably from the development of tourism. Thus Wathey used his position to further his political and economic goals. His position was however point of discussion and debate, as during his ruling period principles as transparency and accountability were marginalized and political integrity was missing (Alders, 2015). There were frequent accusations related to corruption, and numerous commissioned reports have confirmed this disbelief (Alders, 2015; Oostindie & Klinkers, 2001b). These claims of corruption are mostly reviewed in the light of a Western liberal state (e.g. The Netherlands), but these forms of corruption are not seen as corruption on St. Maarten. An example being is that Wathey regarded popularity and personality being of importance in local politics. He stated that “on the island the people vote more for the person” (Badejo, 1989, p. 42). So, in order to gain popularity, he successfully swayed the public through favours and by making sure that inhabitants could identify themselves with him.

Eventually the results of the reports gave rise to a discussion between the Dutch government, the Antillean government and the St. Maarten island administration to set up an inquiry commission, which would start research focussing on corruption and mis-management on the island. This commission was installed in 1991 and came with its conclusion in 1992. One of these conclusions was that the ‘island government does not govern the island’ and that the government is completely failing in executing its tasks (Oostindie & Klinkers, 2001a, p. 216). Therefore, the commission advised for drastic administrative reforms and proposed that the St. Maarten government should be put under curatorship, meaning that all the important financial decision should be sent to the governor for review. Although this period of curatorship was originally meant for one year, it lasted for four years from 1993 till 1996, (Oostindie & Klinkers, 2001a). Within this period the administrative situation improved considerably, which resulted in the island being liberated from the curatorship. What however complicated the situation was hurricane Luis in 1995. Luis was a category four hurricane which devastated St. Maarten.

In order to help, the Netherlands made available a budget of 200 million Guilders to give support and to help the rebuilding process. However due to the lack of trust that this budget would be spent in a proper and sensible manner, the Netherlands installed a rebuilding commission which would have the control on how the budget would be spent (Huisman, 2017; Knaaz, 1995). This construction however resulted in a slow and bureaucratic process regarding the rebuilding and recovery. In the wake of Luis, the island blamed the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles for a slow and bureaucratic system regarding the reconstruction and rebuilding, resulting in St. Maarteners feeling deserted. Luis strengthened the idea that St. Maarten would be better off without the Antilles (Hillebrink, 2013). This idea was already present on the island after the decision of Aruba to leave the Netherlands Antilles in 1986, especially since Aruba experienced strong economic growth after its departure. Even though this feeling of leaving the country was gaining strength on St. Maarten, it was not underlined by a referendum held in 1994. This referendum asked the inhabitants to vote for or against staying part of the Netherlands Antilles. The majority of the St. Maarteners gave their preference to remain being a part of the country. However as indicated previously Luis could be identified as a turning point within this debate. What followed after Luis was a new referendum in 2000, in which the majority chose to become a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands (T. den Hartog, 2017). This referendum could be identified as the starting point of the dismantling of the country of the Netherlands Antilles. Marijnissen stated while quoting Freek van Beetz, former advisor of the last three Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, that: “Actually, one can say that hurricane Luis blew the Netherlands Antilles apart. At least: the lack of help after Luis” (Marijnissen, 2017d). Therefore this case ties into the concepts of disaster politics and disaster diplomacy (Kelman, 2018; Olson, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2010), as Luis catalysed certain changes to happen within the institutional arrangements within the Kingdom.

Following from the referendum held in 2000 on St. Maarten, a different referendum, asking the same question on the future of the Netherlands Antilles, was held on Bonaire, Saba (both 2004), St. Eustatius & Curaçao (both 2005). The result of these referenda was that Bonaire and Saba voted for the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles and to replace this with a closer relationship between them and the Netherlands; Curaçao voted for a separate status (autonomous status); and St. Eustatius voted for a new form of the Netherlands Antilles (Oostindie & Klinkers, 2012). This eventually led to the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles, as Saba, Bonaire & St. Eustatius gained the status of a special municipality within the Netherlands and Curaçao & St. Maarten gained the status of an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Figure 4 gives a visual presentation of this new construction.



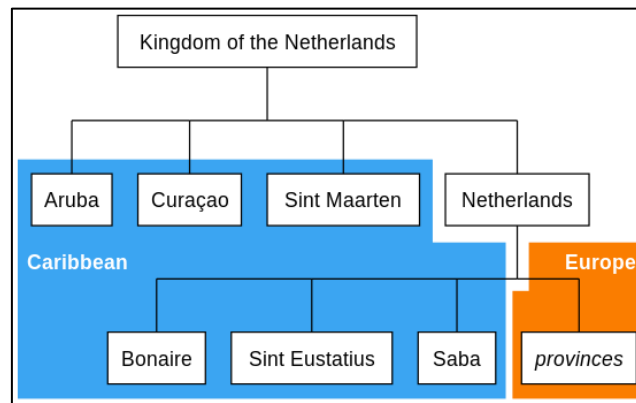


Figure 4 Governance structure of the Kingdom of the Netherlands since 2010 (Wikipedia, 2018)

This entire process lasted around ten years from 2000. So, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2010, the dismantling of the Netherlands Antilles took place and the constitutional changes were set into force. What did not change however was the relationship between the Netherlands and St. Maarten. The earlier mentioned issues regarding the integrity, mis-management and political corruption are still affecting the relation between the two countries (de Jong, 2017). Since 10-10-10 many politicians on St. Maarten have been accused of bribery, corruption and a lack of integrity, of which Theo Heyliger is one. Heyliger is a grandson of former leader Claude Wathey and accused and prosecuted for bribery and vote-buying (König, 2018). This is one of the recent examples of which Broere (2018a, 2018b) & Marijnissen (2017c) are highlighting more. In order to tackle these issues there was again in 2014 a commission installed looking into the reliability and validity of the island's government (Meijer, 2015). This commission was specifically assigned to focus on how public administration functions and which sectors in particular are vulnerable to acting corruptively (Commission Integer openbaar bestuur, 2014). The commission conclude that although since 10-10-10 good steps have been made regarding the integrity, etc. but that certain elements are still occurring on the island (e.g. vote buying) and that an integrity-chamber or anti-corruption body should be installed (2014, p. 73). This was however against the wishes of the politicians on St. Maarten as they felt that this anti-corruption body is not necessary. As a result of this both parties were discussing installing this body since 2015, however without any results (Verlaan, 2017). Both parties struggled with this issue for a couple of years and no progress was made until on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September the situation changed drastically. On this day a category 5+ hurricane named Irma hit St. Maarten and caused a tremendous amount of damage. How this affected the situation severely will be explained in detail in the following chapter.

## 2.6 Conclusion

It is of importance to include how power has shifted when describing how St. Maarten developed over time. Since its discovery by Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century it has experienced many different rulers, before finally becoming a colony of the Netherlands. This status however changed many times from former colony to being a part of an autonomous country within the Kingdom to eventually becoming an autonomous country itself within the Kingdom. These changes have opened opportunities for several

people and families to increase their power, as highlighted by Roitman and Veenendaal (2016). They described how oligarchic families have played an important role in St. Maarten politics from 1800 till 1970. This is however still very much present as certain politicians are in power who are related to previous parliament members or even prime ministers. What also did not change over time are the suspicions of political corruption and a lack of integrity. Where this has been an issue since the creation of the autonomous country the Netherlands Antilles, it is – after multiple attempts combatting it – still very much present on the island. An example being that in the days of Claude Wathey vote buying was an issue of concern for the Netherlands, as this is now still an issue with Wathey grandson Theo Heylinger (Broere, 2019a, 2019b). It could be stated that both of them are representing an (elite) self-interested group of people, who dominated decision making processes and were able to stay in power for long periods of time.

These issues are therefore raising the question whether the situation had changed much after the ending of the colonial status. Before 1954 oligarchic families were dominating the political climate on St. Maarten. After 1954 certain shifts appeared in the political scene, however these did not change the overall situation, as still certain (different) oligarchic families gained much power. These developments are thus showing some resemblance with the colonial period, in which certain people and families remained in control and power. This is why this historical analysis can be useful, as it serves as a background why the quality of local governance of St. Maarten is showing certain shortcomings and where the origins of these problems are located.

So as mentioned, the Dutch government installed several commissions, designed to investigate cases of corruption and lack of integrity. Even though these were pointed out via multiple reports, it still remained difficult to tackle these issues effectively as certain recommendations advised by these commissions were not adapted by the local government. As a result, the guarantee of good governance was pressured, which is part of the *Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands*. Therefore, the Netherlands was struggling with implementing these recommendations. This situation changed however after the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, as this was the date that Hurricane Irma passed St. Maarten.

### 3. Theoretical background

Within this chapter multiple concepts and theories will be explained and highlighted through several examples and cases. The structure is as the following; first concepts related to disasters advocating changes or windows of opportunity will be highlighted and explained, followed how these concepts can be linked within the broader notion of disaster politics. Thirdly the concepts of governmentality, biopower and biopolitics – as introduced by Foucault – will be introduced and explained, followed by biopolitics of disaster which explains how Foucault's concepts could be used within disaster studies. This will then be followed by a sub chapter, which explores the linkages between Foucault's concepts of governmentality, biopower and biopolitics with the notion of disaster politics. The sixth and final sub chapter will then explore how notion of disaster governance fits within this discussion.

#### *3.1 Disaster advocating changes or windows of opportunity*

In recent years more and more literature is focusing on the positive effects of disasters and are providing examples with them (Birkmann et al., 2010; Kelman, 2018; Klein, 2005; Olson, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2010; Warner, 2013). These scholars provide concepts and case studies indicating that disasters can open certain *windows of opportunity*, in which changes can be enforced within a certain situation. Within this sub-chapter different examples of such concepts will be explained. The first of these concepts was introduced by Naomi Klein in 2005 in an article published by *The Nation*. Within this article she presents the concept of disaster capitalism, which she later clarifies in more detail in her 2007 book *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Within this book she highlights – by making use of multiple case studies (differing from hurricane Katrina to the 'war on terror' in Iraq) – that privatisation, government deregulation and the cut of social spending are often advocated after both 'man-made' or 'natural' disasters and that "Wars and disaster responses are so fully privatised, that they are themselves the new market", meaning that wars and disasters can be used for the accumulation of capital within a neoliberal economy (Klein, 2007).

By describing how Katrina devastated certain US states, Loewenstein defines the concept of disaster capitalism as the following "National and transnational governmental institutions instrumental use of catastrophe (both so-called 'natural' and human-mediated disasters, including post conflicting situations) to promote and empower a range of private, neoliberal interests" (Loewenstein, 2017, 2018). Disaster capitalism thus describes how in the aftermath changes in the form of neoliberal policies are being put in place, as the disaster created an opportunity to do so. This can create a situation in which neoliberal governmentality is extended, such as in New Orleans where public housing was destroyed after Katrina and the opportunity raised to build private condos at these locations (Klein, 2007). This was a development already wanted before Katrina, as Richard Baker, a Republican from New Orleans, asserted: "We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God did" (Klein, 2007, p. 4). This indicates that these developments do not occurred simultaneously after a disaster but

were already ongoing processes before the disaster. Therefore, the disaster could be identified as a catalyst, for these developments to be executed. This will be linked more explicitly to neoliberal governmentality and biopolitics – as indicated by Marchezini (2015) and Fletcher (2010) – in the following paragraphs.

So where disaster capitalism focusses more on the development of the (neoliberal) market in the aftermath of disaster, the concept of disaster diplomacy focusses on how diplomatic relationship can change as result of disaster-related activities (Kelman, 2018; Kelman, Field, Suri, & Bhat, 2018). Kelman defined the concept as the following: “Disaster diplomacy examines how and why disaster-related activities (disaster risk reduction and post-disaster activities) do and do not influence peace and conflict processes” (2018, p. 1). Kelman (2019) provides on his website multiple case studies indicating and explaining what disaster diplomacy entails. As he describes: “disaster diplomacy case studies are not just about what happens when a volcano erupts in a war zone or when enemies consider sending and accepting humanitarian aid. They also examine the situation before a disaster manifests, such as how a flood warning system could potentially bring together communities” (Kelman, 2018, p. 175)

As mentioned previously disaster diplomacy focuses on a changing diplomatic relationship and disaster capitalism focusses on a change or development of a (neoliberal) market in the aftermath of a disaster. What they however both have in common is that there are both describing a process which are influenced by politics and political forces. It could therefore be stated that both concepts could be identified as being part of the notion of disaster politics, as described by Olson (2000). This concept will be explained in more detail within the following paragraph.

### ***3.2 Disaster politics***

Recent research and policy priorities which are driven by issues such as urbanization and climate change have created a higher demand for understanding how disaster impacts and reconstruction could potentially restructure political systems and the governable space they occupy (Pelling & Dill, 2010). This gap could be filled by focusing on the politics of disaster, which has been used previously by analysts of disaster. A disaster politics analysis “focuses on the interaction of social and political actors and framing institutions in preparing for and responding to extreme natural events, and suggest that the disaster events and their management are part of unfolding political histories” (Pelling & Dill, 2010, p. 21). Olson raises the question why it has been so difficult to gain sustained and systematic attention to the political aspects of disasters (2000, p. 154). The concept has not been used much by political scientists, as they did not study disaster as these were perceived as being engineering problems. He related to this neglect by giving two distinct reasons; first, political scientists were not part of the founding leaders of the field, as these were geographers and sociologists, and second, that many disaster researchers and practitioners are carrying a negative meaning of disasters politics, and “who simply believe that there shouldn’t be a politics of disaster (Olson, 2000, p. 154). However, by simply ignoring political aspect of disasters will not make it disappear. This also fits within the discussion raised by

Oliver-Smith that disaster should not be seen as a ‘natural’, but that disaster might be triggered by natural events, but these take place within human social spaces. Therefore we construct our own disasters insofar as disasters occur in the environments that we produce (Oliver-Smith, 1999, 2004).

So in order to increase the deeper understanding of the politics-disaster nexus, Olson stated that we have to understand “an often overlooked but fundamentally important fact: In any disaster, government officials are confronted with the need to not only *manage* the situation but also *explain* it (Olson, 2000, p. 154). Three politicizing questions, which these officials have to answer, are almost always posed in the aftermath; (1) What happened? (2) Why were the losses (so) high and/or the response (so) inadequate? (3) What will happen now? The combination of the answers could be considered as being politics.

Olson also mentions the importance of sub-concepts of disaster phases, mitigation and preparedness. Five different phases together constitute a circle, while mitigation focusses on preventing certain occurrences, and preparedness is the detailed planning for quick and efficient disaster response. In short, preparedness is aimed at improving the response to the impacts which have not been prevented by mitigation measures (Olson, 2000, pp. 156–157). As concluded by Drury & Olson, political change is most likely to occur when disaster losses are high, when the impacted regime was repressive, and where income inequality and national development levels are low (1998, p. 159). So, in order to prevent political change from happening, politics – via executing biopolitics through forms of governmentality – are focussing on the preparedness and mitigation measurements in order to respond to a potential disaster or to prevent it from happening. This is however not only to save lives and to protect property, but also as Olson puts it “to control the political stakes, to keep events from crossing the threshold to increasing problematic political levels”. This is especially relevant as disaster were first perceived as acts of God, leaving it outside the realm of possible human control and modification, but now these are seen as inside this realm, making it possible for humans to control and modify it. Communities and societies are holding leaders responsible for not only the management of postimpact response, recovery and reconstruction programs, but also for mitigation and preparedness (Olson, 2000, p. 160).

### ***3.3 Governmentality, biopower & biopolitics***

While disaster politics tells us about how social and political actors are preparing and responding to extreme natural events, the notion of governmentality tells us on how forms of action and field of practice are structuring human activities. Governmentality is a concept developed by Michel Foucault during his lectures at the Collège de France, between 1977 and 1984. By introducing the term governmentality Foucault argued that it can be seen as a certain mentality, being the common ground of modern forms of political thought and action (Rose, O’Malley, & Valverde, 2006) and that it can be seen as the “art of government” (Foucault, 1991). Foucault defined the notion of governmentality as the following:

*“I intend this concept of "governmentality" to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other” (Foucault, 1997, p. 300 emphasis added).*

The concept of governmentality thus includes forms of action and fields of practice which are structuring human activities. When introducing the concept, Foucault situated it within his ‘sovereignty-discipline-government’ triangle, but this shifted more towards seeing it as broad term labelling various modes of what he calls ‘conducting conduct’ (Fletcher, 2010; Foucault, 1991). The term ‘conducting conduct’ or ‘conduct of conduct’ is a term which according to Foucault explains the central problem of modern government; a term ranging from "governing the self" to "governing others" (Lemke, 2002, p. 50). Foucault viewed the concept of governmentality as a form of power that is effected through a range of techniques which shape how individuals governed their personal conduct (Mullings, 2012). This will be explained more into detail within the following paragraphs.

Drawing on Foucault, Fletcher described four different types of governmentalities at work in general and in conservation discourses (2010, p. 177). The types he described are; disciplinary, neoliberalism, sovereignty and truth (art of government). Based on Foucault’s, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), these describe types of “governmentalities operating within politics in general” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 177). Fletcher describes how Foucault differentiates between how these different modes operate under different principles by stating that:

*“While a disciplinary governmentality operates principally through the internalisation of social norms and ethical standards to which individuals conform due to fears of deviance and immorality, and which they thus exercise both over themselves and one another, a neoliberal governmentality seeks merely to create external incentive structures within which individuals, understood as self-interested rational actors, can be motivated to exhibit appropriate behaviours through manipulation of incentives” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 173).*

These different governmentalities also have an effect on the exercise of ‘biopower’/‘biopolitics’. Biopower is a concept used by Foucault to describe a form of power in which primarily modern western societies wish to not only execute sovereign power over their populations but instead to legitimate their power by claiming that it serves to improve the health (etc.) of its population (Fletcher, 2010). It “signals a form of power that promotes the security and well-being of individual and collective life” (Grove, 2014, p. 198). Foucault uses the concept to describe how modern societies substituted the exercise of sovereign power to the notion of biopower. He explains the difference between sovereign power and biopower by stating that sovereign power claims to ‘take life or let live’, while biopower claims ‘to make live and to let die’ (Fletcher, 2010; Foucault, 2003, p. 241). According to Büscher, while quoting Dillon and Reid (2009, p. 87), this latter quote entails that;

*“Life and its many forms need to be studied, ordered and classified so as to be able to decide ‘whom to correct and whom to punish, as well as who shall live and who shall die, what life-forms will be promoted and which will be terminated’” (Büscher, 2018, p. 2), in order to create a so called ‘desired state’ (idem).*

Several fields, or as Foucault named them ‘*apparatus*’ or ‘*dispositifs*’ (e.g. urban planning, public health, political economy) were developed within the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to face issues such as poverty, unemployment and diseases (issues which could be considered as risks to the population). These issues were now regarded as governmental concerns, and the population was regarded by these fields as living organisms which need to be fostered and taken care of (Marchezini, 2015). By developing ‘*apparatuses*’ or ‘*dispositifs*’, populations could be fostered and taken care of in order to reduce the risks opposing them. Foucault named this governmental concern over human populations ‘*biopolitics*’ (Foucault, 1978, 2003; Marchezini, 2015).

### **3.4 Biopolitics of disaster**

The concept of biopolitics has also been used within the field of disaster studies. An example of such a study has been provided by Marchezini in his 2015 article on *The Biopolitics of Disaster: Power, Discourses, and Practices*. He states “With the increase in frequency and visibility of disasters, there has been a proliferation of security apparatuses to manage risks and crisis” (Marchezini, 2015, p. 363). This resulted in what he names the ‘*biopolitics of disaster*’. Examples of such security apparatuses could be: Geographic Information Systems (GIS), risks maps, statistics, governmental agencies. These apparatuses are designed to tackle the issues regarding disaster prevention, relief and recovery (Marchezini, 2015).

Marchezini used the concept of biopolitics of disaster when analysing how biopolitical forms of governance are interpreted and acted upon by numerous social actors working within government response agencies within Brazil (Marchezini, 2015). He highlights how the response to the flood disaster in São Luiz do Paraitinga by governmental agencies has in a response which could be classified as biopolitical. During the period of emergency these agencies produced several discourses and practices which were intended to create the idea of state agencies saving lives. Marchezini argues however that “the mandate of saving biological lives was gradually converted into the devaluation of social life” (2015, p. 370). This devaluation of social life was not produced by floods within the region, but it was socially produced. Marchezini stated that this devaluation of social life could be considered as an invisible disaster and that it could be identified in the ‘*sociospatial inequalities of reconstruction*’. These inequalities are leading into the enrichment of certain territories, while other are ignored and neglected (Marchezini, 2015, p. 370)

### ***3.5 Governmentality and the link to disaster politics***

Foucault thus described how the development of certain ‘*apparatuses*’ could be linked to the governmental concern of human populations. This governmental concern is where the disaster politics can be linked to the concept of governmentality and biopolitics. Governmentality is relatively new within the field of disaster studies. Foucault described that in order to sustain life, life and its many forms need to be studied, order and classified in order to decide whom to correct and whom to punish (Büscher, 2018, p. 2) and that this governmental concern over human populations was called *biopolitics* (Foucault, 1978, 2003). So, both biopolitics and disaster politics are focussing on fostering human populations in order to sustain life and disaster politics adds to this that politicians are doing this to sustain and remain their power. By providing certain tools of analysis (e.g. values on stake, agenda control, causal stories, and political accounts/blame management), Olson offered ways of analysing how disasters are political and that these need to be explained (2000, p. 167). These tools are related to Marchezini’s analysis when describing how the response to a flood disaster in São Luiz do Paraitinga by governmental agencies could be classified as biopolitical (2015, p. 370). By making use of discourse analysis while analysing disaster governance, Marchezini highlighted that practical elements and symbolic languages are used to manage the biopolitics of disaster. He revealed “the devaluation of social life that results from biopolitical disaster response” and that “this devaluation could be identified in the bureaucratic procedures of legal and exceptional measures of different governmental agencies with their jurisdictions and incoherent agendas” (2015, p. 369). The use of these practical elements and symbolic languages fits within the an earlier made conclusion made by Pelling & Dill, who stated that:

*“Recent large disasters have highlighted both the importance of political context and the possibility that disaster impact and response can influence subnational, national and international politics. These events have coincided with the rise of a security discourse in policy and academic communities, which has repositioned extreme events, especially those associated with climate change, as threats to national and human security”* (2010, p. 34 Emphasis added).

So, it can be stated that the concepts of biopolitics of disaster and disaster politics are much related to each other, both looking into the response to a disaster advocated a change within a specific context. Both concepts complement each other as the within the response phase after a disaster, certain forms of disaster politics can result in a new form of governmentality advocating a form of disaster biopolitics. As highlighted by Sökefeld:

*“Disasters often provide situations in which the expansion of governmentality accelerates and the state advances into areas of life which before had not been under its purview and control”*(2012, p. 7).



This however is related to the functioning of a disaster management structure when a disaster hits a region or country. Therefore, the disaster governance structure should be analysed when a disaster hits and it should be reviewed how this structure functioned in the different phases of a disaster. The following paragraphs will clarify what the notion of disaster governance entails and how it fits with the disaster politics and governmentality/biopolitics concepts.

### **3.6 Disaster governance**

The notion of disaster governance has not been used that commonly within the disaster's literature. Instead of focussing on disaster governance the trend has been to focus on concepts such as disaster management or disaster risk reduction (Tierney, 2012). The concept can be included under the more general notion of risk governance, covering a variety of risks threatening human populations. Hazards and disasters could be considered being part of these varieties of risks. Tierney defined the concept of disaster governance as the following:

*“Disaster governance consists of the interrelated sets of norms, organizational and institutional actors, and practices (spanning predisaster, transdisaster, and postdisaster periods) that are designed to reduce the impacts and losses associated with disasters arising from natural and technological agents and from intentional acts of terrorism.”*(2012, p. 344)

As mentioned above certain sets of measures (norms, organizational and institutional actors and practices) are created or developed in order to reduce any potential impacts from disasters. These sets of measures can vary between the disaster phases (e.g. prevention, preparedness, recovery, response). These sets of measures could be placed under the label of security apparatuses, as mentioned earlier by Marchezini (2015). However these sets of measures (such as disaster or emergency plans) could sometimes be identified as ‘fantasy documents’, as indicated by Clarke (1999) and Birkland (2009). Clarke describes how these documents are sometimes “little more than vague hopes for remote futures” and that they are “not functional in the sense of serving as blueprint for coordination and action but are functional in the sense of asserting to others that the uncontrollable can be controlled” (Clarke, 1999, p. 16). Thus, the existence of these sets of measures does not simply imply that potential impacts of disaster can be reduced. More factors (e.g. strength of governance system, and force of the potential disaster) are also debited to the functioning of these measures. This will be explained in more detail down below.

Tierney asserts that the current systems in place regarding disaster governance have been formed by multiple economic, social, and political forces (forces including trends such as globalization, economic and political dynamics within the world system, and associated socio-demographic trends) (Tierney, 2012). International and global institutions (e.g. United Nations, The World Bank) are important actors in shaping disaster governance on a more global scale and particularly in developing countries. Tierney states that;

*“Poorer nations, which face numerous other pressing problems on an everyday basis, often lack the capacity to develop and sustain disaster governance capabilities. Many such nations are dependent on international institutions even for basic post disaster assistance.”*(2012, p. 346)

Tierney continued by stating that “the potential for severe disaster impacts is heightened in societies in which overall governance systems are weak, as is often the case in less-developed nations” and that disaster vulnerability can also be related to certain governance conditions such as “corruption, lack of respect for the rule of law, weak environmental regulations, and lack of meaningful public participation in decision making” (2012, p. 346).

Examples of this process are highlighted by the case in Brazil in which Marchezini highlighted how the response of the Brazilian governmental agencies has resulted in the production of several discourses and practices which eventually lead to the idea that state agencies were saving lives while this “mandate of saving biological lives was gradually converted into the devaluation of social life” (Marchezini, 2015, p. 370). So, the devaluation of social life was not produced by floods, but it was socially produced. Providing the case of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Tierney highlights that the 7.0 magnitude shock was trigger but not the main source of large-scale damage and loss of life. This was more build up by the ‘historical forces’ resulting in poverty, unregulated urban growth, and environmental degradation. Together with the inability of Haiti to put in place effective disaster risk reduction measurements, the disaster itself became a reflection of weak overall governance capacity (Tierney, 2012). When describing how in 2016 multiple hurricanes devastated several Caribbean islands, Bohle (2018) states that these hurricanes showed the vulnerability of several territories within the Caribbean. He stated that “hurricane events not only reveal the vulnerability of people or governments on a national scale, as in Haiti, but they often reveal socio-spatial inequalities within societies as well” (Bohle, 2018, p. 126). These examples show that a disaster could possibly be identified as an event which highlights already existing problems and issues present within that region or country. Both the functioning of the disaster governance structure in reaction to a disaster and the applied structure responding to the disaster could potentially play a role in the creation of windows of opportunities. Therefore, when analysing if certain forms of governmentalities advocating forms of biopolitics are being put into place within windows of opportunity which opened up in the aftermath of a disaster, the analysis of the disaster governance structure in place (and how it functions) could give an insight how these windows of opportunities have been created.

## 4. Methodology

Within this research the main objective was to explore how disaster governance together with the development of St. Maarten over time affected disaster response after Hurricane Irma. Therefore, to achieve this objective, the following research question was drafted;

*How has disaster governance in combination with St. Maarten's development affected disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma?*

Subsequently, in order to give a sufficient answer and to sharpen the focus of the analysis and data collection, the main research question was operationalized through the following sub-research questions (SRQ);

1. *What different factors have shaped development on St. Maarten? And how have these influenced the vulnerability level?*
2. *What characterises disaster governance in St. Maarten?*
3. *Why has disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma been disjointed?*
4. *How do different groups on the island understand efforts to relieve vulnerability or increase resilience?*

This chapter will therefore highlight how multiple research methodologies contributed to answering these different research questions. I will highlight in the first section how the research was set up, and organised. Secondly the different data collection methods which I used will be explained, together with how these are linked to the sub research questions. Then thirdly a clarification will be provided on how I analysed the gained data and judged it for its relevance. And finally, within the last section, certain practical and ethical issues – which I faced during the fieldwork period – will be explained and elaborated.

### **4.1 Research set up**

My research was conducted between September 2018 and May 2019, in which a fieldwork period of 2.5 months took place between October 2018 and December 2018 in St. Maarten – not to be confused with the French part, Saint-Martin. This fieldwork period was hosted by a local NGO named the Nature Foundation St. Maarten. This non-profit environment organisation is working to promote conservation of St. Maarten's environment. After contacting them in July 2018, they agree on hosting me during my fieldwork period. They thus offered me a working place at their office, and logistical support during my stay were needed. In return, I assisted them with certain activities related to the conservation of St. Maarten's environment (e.g. raising public awareness, monitoring of coral reefs, etc.). Simultaneously

the staff of the NGO helped me with getting familiar to the research area, and assisted with introducing me to the field (see section 4.4 for detailed description)

I made within this research use of qualitative research methods – such as interviews and observations – when analysing the main research question focussing on how disaster governance in combination with St. Maarten’s development affected the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma. Multiple sub-research questions (SRQ) helped in the process of analysing this case study. The different methodologies used for each SRQ are described below in table 1. These methodologies are then further described in section 4.2.

The preparatory phase of my research took place in September 2018, in which I explored scientific literature on the concepts presented in the theoretical framework. What followed was the fieldwork period, in which I conducted multiple interviews and numerous observations were made. These interviews took place on a specific time (scheduled) and date. However certain interviews were not planned and took place on the spot (see section 4.2 for further explanation). I analysed these interviews in the third and final phase, which lasted from January 2019 till May 2019. After returning from the field, I analysed the gathered data from the interviews and observations in the third and final phase. This period lasted from January 2019 till May 2019, in which I analysed the data on its relevance to the case and how it could be linked to the theory. Section 4.3 will further explain this process of data analysis.

#### 4.2 Research methods for data collection

Within this research I used multiple methods in order to gain more understanding on the topic. Table 1 highlights which of these methods have been used when collecting data for the different SRQ. Where this table is merely mentioning these, the following subsections will explained each of the selected methods more in detail.

*Table 1 Used methodologies for each sub research question*

| Sub research questions   | Methods used   |
|--|--|
| <i>What different factors have shaped development on St. Maarten? And how have these influenced the vulnerability level?</i> | The main methods used when answering this question were <b>literature review</b> and <b>interviews</b> . Both provided the necessary information and data on how St. Maarten developed over time. By linking this with articles and reports describing why St. Maarten is in such a vulnerable position, it offered a possibility to identify the different responsible factors. |
| <i>What characterises disaster governance in St. Maarten?</i>  | This SRQ was answered by making use of multiple methods. At first a <b>literature review</b> was performed, analysing how the disaster governance system on St.  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | Maarten came into place, and how it is organised. The gathered data was then cross checked during several <b>interviews</b> . These interviews also provided additional information which was not found within the literature.   |
| <i>Why has disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma been disjointed?</i>                                  | Again, this SRQ was answered by combining two methods. A <b>literature review</b> looked into the disaster response and analysed why it had been disjointed. However, data gained from <b>interviews</b> was used to cross check the previous gained data, and these provided additional information.  |
| <i>How do different groups on the island understand efforts to relieve vulnerability or increase resilience?</i> | Multiple <b>interviews</b> – both <b>informal and semi-structured</b> – were conducted in order to answer this SRQ. The gathered data was analysed and compared to data found within online <b>literature</b> . This was mainly collecting by examining (online) news articles, originating from several organisations (e.g. Trouw, NOS, NRC, Volkskrant). |

## 1. Observations

I made use of different methods within the fieldwork period in order to gain data. One of these was making (participant) observations. This method was used in order to get a better understanding of the conditions (e.g. housing, infrastructural) present on St. Maarten. I either took role of participant observant – in which I took the role of an “insider who observes and records some aspects of life around them” – or as observing participant – in which I “participated in some aspects of life around them and record what they can” (Bernard, 2011, p. 260). By adapting these roles, I managed to make numerous observations, providing me the necessary (qualitative) data on what these current conditions were like. These observations differed from writing fieldnotes describing certain situations, to taking pictures and videos. Together these offered me the possibility to gain a better understanding on present physical (e.g. housing, infrastructure) situation on St. Maarten.

## 2. Interviews

The different interviews carried out within this research took place during the fieldwork period on St. Maarten. The majority of the interviews were done in a semi-structured way, making these largely under control. As described by Bernard (2011) semi-structured interviewing is based on the use of an interview guide, which is a written list of questions and topics that need to be covered. I chose this method of interviewing as it provided me the possibility to be fully in control of the interview, and it offers the

possibility for both the researcher and interviewee to follow new leads. Most of the semi-structured interviews were recorded with an audio recorder, for which permission was asked from the interviewees at the start of the interview. Another interview method which I used within my research is informal interviewing. Bernard (2011) describes this as a method characterized by a lack of structure or control. By making use of this methods, normal conversations heard during the course of a day in the field were remembered and written down as fast as possible. The latter was of importance as Bernard highlights “the faster you write up your observations, the more detail you can get down” (2011, p. 297).

*Table 2 Overview of respondents*

|                                    |  | Date       | Language | Recorded |
|------------------------------------|--|------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Interviewee 1</b>               | Resident of St. Maarten                                  | 23-10-2018 | English  | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 2</b>               | Resident of St. Maarten                                  | 26-10-2018 | English  | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 3a. 3.b 3.c 3.d</b> | NGO Employees  | 26-10-2018 | English  | No       |
| <b>Interviewee 4</b>               | Senior government official interim recovery committee 1. | 13-11-2018 | Dutch    | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 5</b>               | Senior government official interim recovery committee 2. | 16-11-2018 | Dutch    | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 6</b>               | NGO Employee   | 20-11-2018 | Dutch    | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 7</b>               | Government official VROMI                                | 28-11-2018 | English  | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 8</b>               | Fire department Chief                                    | 29-11-2018 | English  | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 9</b>               | Head section disaster management                         | 04-12-2018 | Dutch    | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 10</b>              | Interview community leader Dutch Quarter                 | 05-12-2018 | English  | Yes      |
| <b>Interviewee 11</b>              | Interview community leader Cole Bay                      | 12-12-2018 | English  | Yes      |

So, I interviewed multiple experts in order to get a deeper understanding on how disaster governance in combination with St. Maarten’s development affected the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma. However, I did not only interview these experts, as multiple residents were interviewed as well. Table 2 shows the different respondents which took part of this thesis research. It highlights the date, presence of a recording device, and the language in which the interview took place. When the interviewee’s native language was Dutch, then the interview was conducted in Dutch as well. This made the interviewee more comfortable and raised the level of trust. The interviewees were always asked before the interview if they would agree with me recording it. If the interviewee approved, the interviews were recorded. If they did not approve, then notes (pen and paper) were taken during the interview. By the end of every interview, the recording device was clearly switch off, after which sometimes the conversation continued. This offered the respondent the opportunity to speak more freely on certain aspects, as some interviewees did not want to speak about certain topics while being

recorded. These topics were then discussed after the recording device was switch off and were therefore still covered.

### 3. Literature review

Literature review has been another method which I used within this research. Within the first step, scientific literature was used when describing and linking the concepts within the theoretical framework. I analysed scientific articles on governmentality, disaster politics and disaster governance, and discussed and used these within the theoretical framework. The next step of the literature study was more focussing on other literature sources, related to the case study itself. I analysed several scientific articles as well as historical books in order to create an image of how St. Maarten developed over time and what different factors have shaped this development. The third step focused on the characteristics of disaster governance on St. Maarten, in which I analysed multiple governmental reports and documents – such as the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP). This analysis also focussed on how this governance system functioned during and after Irma. Gathered data on this latter part was however a combination of both literature review and semi-structured interviews. My analysis of the gathered data resulted in a detailed description of St. Maarten's disaster governance system and how it functioned (chapter 5). Where the other steps mainly focussed on policy documents or scientific literature, the fourth and final step focussed more on gathering information from other literature sources. As one of the sub research questions was focussed on how different groups understood efforts to relieve vulnerability, it was essential to gather new and topical information. Therefore (local) newspapers – such as NOS, NRC, Trouw, Volkskrant, The Daily Herald – were checked for relevant information on a regular basis. These newspapers provided me articles on St. Maarten, describing the current issues, problems and information regarding its population and regarding the trust construction.

### 4. Triangulation

The different methods described above generated different types of data sets. When comparing these different sets, the validity and reliability of the different sources was tested. For instance, data subtracted from one of the interviews was compared to data gained through literature, as was the case when interviewing for example the governmental employees. Therefore, I managed to apply a form of triangulation as both findings – data from interviews and literature – were compared. Triangulation was thus done through the use of multiple methods (observations, interviews, literature review), and of sources (e.g. newspapers, reports), and by cross-checking my gained data and

interpretation of it with other researchers. This process of triangulation thus decreased the possibility of having an incorrect data set, and thus contributed to the validity of the research.

### ***4.3 Data analysis***

After the fieldwork period, I had to transcribe and analysed many of the different interviews. Within this process of transcribing and analysing the challenge was to organise the data in a comprehensible and significant manner. Therefore, when the process of transcribing was finished, I printed the different interviews and read them several times in order to identify the main recurring themes. I then linked these to the literature where possible, and where therefore organised in an adequate manner.

Another challenge regarding the data analysis process, relates to me judging which data was relevant (and which was not). The relevancy of the data was checked by discussing on a regular basis with other researchers (studying the same subject) and by comparing it to previous studies and literature. These studies were organised and analysed by making use of Mendeley. This program offered me the possibility to keep my notes in one programme, making it less difficult finding earlier made notes. These notes in combination with the results of the discussions were added to the working documents as comments. By adding them as a memo it eventually helped me identifying and writing the main points of discussion.

### ***4.4 Fieldwork***

As mentioned, the research site of this thesis is St. Maarten, an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. My fieldwork period enabled me to speak to relevant actors for this research. St. Maarten was however still recovering from Irma that took place in September 2017 and a final trust fund agreement was signed in April 2018. This in combination with a slow recovery process, much of the done damage was still clearly visible. Therefore St. Maarten could be regarded as a post-disaster environment. As a result, during the fieldwork I had to face and deal with certain practical and ethical issues. Within the following paragraphs, some of these issues are discussed further below – gaining access and ethnographic seduction (Robben, 1995).

The first practical issue I faced within this research was that of gaining access to the field. Gaining access is just more than only entering the field itself, but also on finding the right people to speak to and making them willing to speak to you. As the preparation phase towards the fieldwork period was relatively short, the first two weeks of the actual fieldwork were used to familiarize myself with the research area and to contact people who would be willing to participate. My host organisation on St. Maarten – The Nature Foundation St. Maarten – assisted in this process, as they provided me with the opportunity to use their social media accounts for introducing me and the research to the field. Annex 1 highlights the message that was spread through these accounts. This organisation also managed to put



me in contact with a local newspaper, resulting in me publishing a short article highlighting what the research was about and explaining that people could contact me if they were willing to participate (see Annex 1). As a result, these posts managed to put me in contact with a few people willing to speak on their experiences and opinion. Furthermore, as indicated previously, other institutional actors were interviewed as well. These were contacted directly via mail, asking if they would be willing to participate in the research. Due to the extensive network of my host organisation, contact details of possible interviewees were gained quickly or – alternatively – employees introduced me directly to the relevant persons. The different interviewees were asked at the end of the interview if they knew another person who would possibly be of interest for the research. This sampling strategy – snowball sampling – offered the respondents the possibility to further refer me to other possible interviewees. This strategy did however not always turn out to be successful, as certain respondents did not know any other persons of interest of the interview.

Another issue which occurred within this process was that certain people to which I was referred to, did not want to speak to me. They did not see a reason why they would speak to me, as there was nothing in for them or they felt threatened (by governmental organisations) to share information. Therefore, to encourage these people to talk to me, I tried to convince that telling their story and sharing their ideas and opinions does matter. What I however did not promise them was, that speaking to me would eventually change their situation, as this was not realistic and unfair to promise. As St. Maarten was a post-disaster environment, in which certain people felt not safe or had certain trust issue regarding governmental organisations, it was of importance that the anonymity of the respondents would be guaranteed. This would give the respondents the opportunity to speak more freely on their thoughts, and it would fit within the ‘do no harm’ principle. The latter is of importance, because once entering a field a researcher should aim at preventing and mitigating any negative impacts (of his or her actions) towards the respondents. If this is not done in a proper and sufficient manner, the field could potentially be damaged, meaning that future researchers would have to deal with certain issues (e.g. lack of trust towards research) produced by previous research. Therefore, in order to live up to this ‘do no harm’ principle, this research guaranteed full anonymity for the respondents when participating. Consequently, data and information provided by respondents could thus not be traced back to a certain individual, therefore protecting them from any potential further consequences (e.g. losing their job) related to this given data.

Another issue related to the fieldwork is that of ethnographic seduction. Robben (1995) used this concept when describing how one can be led astray from an intended course, meaning that the researcher abandons its critical detachment when conducting interviews with key informants. Robben explains that a researcher should be aware of ethnographic seduction – in particular in post-disaster or post-conflict research settings – as one might be seduced by the different stories that are being told. As Robben highlights “it is much easier to acknowledge manipulation by victimizers than by victims” (1995, p. 84). Therefore, as a researcher you should be aware of your own biases, to the benefit of getting

a better understanding of both the 'victim' and the 'victimizer'. As a result, during this research if certain interviews became either too personal or affected my emotional state to such a degree that it was difficult seeing the discourse behind the conversation, my response was to steer the conversation into 'neutral waters'. An example of steering towards such 'neutral waters' could be that when an interviewee started getting emotional when talking about the effects of Irma on his or her livelihood, that I shifted the conversation to a more general topic (e.g. development of tourism over time). Breaking away from both my and the interviewee's emotions offered me the possibility to once again analyse the interview in a more neutral manner. This therefore contributed to the diminishing any possible biases created by ethnographic seduction, when analysing the data.

## **5. Disaster governance on St. Maarten**

As introduced previously on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, a category 5+ hurricane hit the Caribbean region including St. Maarten. It started on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2017, when a tropical storm developed into a hurricane nearby the Republic of Cabo Verde, an archipelago within the central Atlantic Ocean. This hurricane (named Irma) progressed rapidly after one day into a category three hurricane and later into a category five hurricane on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. Two days later, on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Irma reached Antigua and Barbuda and later that day it reached the island of St. Maarten, causing tremendous damage. Transportation to, from and on the island was hard due to the severely damaged infrastructure. Communication to and from the island was difficult due to the fact that communication networks were badly damaged and could not be used anymore (NOS, 2017). Only after a few days after Irma passed, communication networks started to operate again. It then became more clear what damage Irma has made on St. Maarten. Over 70% of the infrastructure had been destroyed on the southern Dutch side. The Dutch Red Cross estimated that over 90% of the infrastructure had been damaged. Many inhabitants of the island lost their houses or parts of their homes were badly damaged (e.g. roofs). Important transportation nodes on the island were severely damaged, including the airport (Princess Juliana International Airport) and the harbour (Westerink, 2017). When the island was still trying to recover and trying to map the damage caused by Irma, the next hurricane named José was approaching the region. However the damage caused by José was limited, mainly because the eye of José passed the island around 120km away (Westerink, 2017).

Where previous chapters have focussed merely on the theoretical perspective, methodology or on how St. Maarten developed over time, this chapter will present a reflection on the response of different involved organisations in the aftermath of Irma. It will highlight the organisational disaster management structure on St. Maarten. Secondly the functioning of this structure during/after Irma will be elaborated. Finally, the trust fund governance structure and the importance of it will be highlighted, as well as how it functions, and which implications arose as a result of this.

### **5.1 Organisational structure of disaster management on St. Maarten**

St. Maarten's disaster management plan was designed to provide both a technical and organizational plan which could deal with the first recovery processes of multiple disaster events in an efficient way. It has been created as a reaction to hurricane Luis, as the previous system in place did not function during the preparation and aftermath phases. The plan was constructed for the entire Netherlands Antilles between 1995 and 2000 and adapted locally if necessary. This development could be identified as the development of a *security apparatus* as described by Foucault (1978) and Marchezini (2015), aiming at tackling issues regarding disaster prevention, relief and recovery. The development of this organisational structure is however mainly focussing on the relief and recovery phases of the disaster cycle. The disaster events included in the plan vary from earthquakes and tropical storms/hurricanes to major incidents such as the failure of (critical) infrastructure or a plane crash. As directly described;

*“The disaster plan is an organisational plan, in which in a general sense is indicated how in the case of a disaster or a threatening disaster should be acted in order to generate an effective response to the disaster or major accident and its consequences, or to even prevent a disaster. In this plan the focus is not on the aspects regarding the technical implementation, but on the administrative, organizational and coordinating aspects when combatting a disaster.”*(Overheid.nl, 2001)

It thus provides an organisational plan on how St. Maarten should prepare for and respond to a possible disaster. Figure 5 presents a visual representation of this organisational plan. At the top of the scheme is the Prime Minister (PM). The PM has the supreme command and is both responsible for the cohesion between the different actions plans present within the different Emergency Support Function (ESF) groups and for the training of the staff members involved in the disaster management process. Below the PM is the Fire Chief of the St. Maarten Fire Department & Disaster Management. The Fire Chief acts as National Disaster Coordinator during a disaster, and the Fire Chief advises the PM regarding whether it is necessary to launch the national disaster plan in the event of the occurrence of a disaster or major incident. If this is the case the Fire Chief is also responsible for inviting the relevant ESF groups to meet to coordinate and align any disaster management related issues. These ten different ESF groups are shown in figure 5. These ESF are presenting different sectors present on the island such as the water and energy services (GEBE) and the police and fire departments. Each of every ten ESF have a coordinator responsible for the functioning of the group. These ten ESF coordinators are form together with the PM and the Fire Chief the Strategic Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) (Government of St. Maarten, 2017).

The ten ESF groups are responsible for designing action plans for their own areas of expertise. These action plans need to be designed in collaboration with all the involved stakeholders within the different ESF groups. The involvement of these stakeholders is necessary in order to develop certain checklist which can be used in the event of a disaster. Every plan from the different ESF groups are

made in collaboration with the Fire Chief. As mentioned earlier the Fire Chief organises meeting with the different ESF group coordinators. These meetings could be as part of a training exercise, or could be in the case of a (future) disaster on St. Maarten (Overheid.nl, 2001).

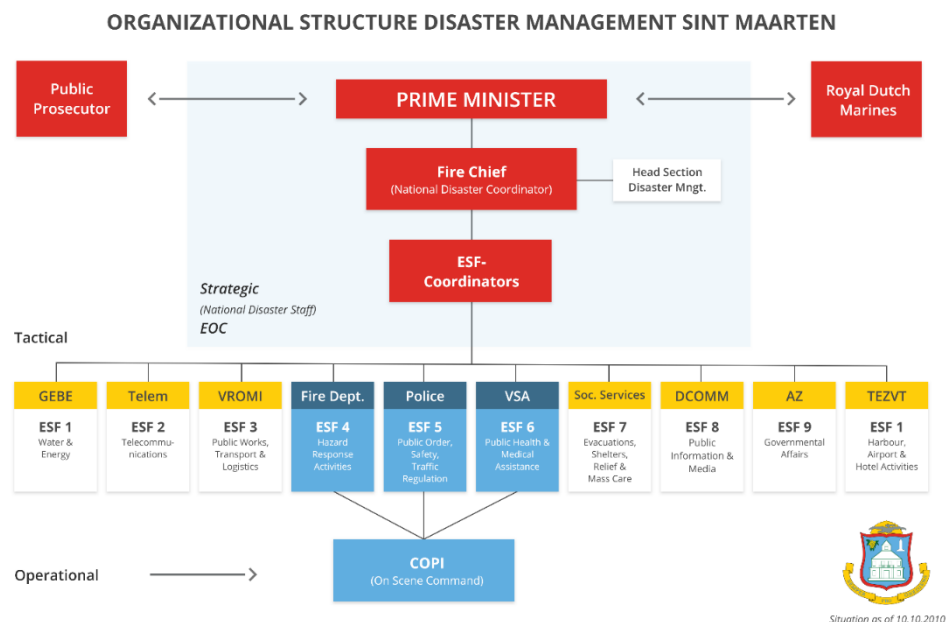


Figure 5 St. Maarten's National Disaster Management plan (Government of St. Maarten, 2018)

As indicated in figure 5, the different ESFs form the tactical level of the disaster management plan. There is however also an operational level within the structure. This consists of three ESFs; the Fire Department, Police Department and the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour. These three ESFs are together forming the COPI (in Dutch Commando Plaats Incident) and they are responsible; for carrying on-site operational management regarding the response to the disaster or major accident; coordination of the deployment of the control units in the immediate vicinity of the accident; taking measures aimed at preventing and limiting victims at the scene of the incident/disaster; providing assistance to victims; and providing information regarding the response to the disaster or major accident. Thus the COPI is responsible for operationalizing the disaster management practices in the case of a disaster or major accident (Overheid.nl, 2001).

The development of this organisational structure could thus be identified as the development of a security apparatus, aiming at focussing on relief and recovery after a disaster. It also fits within the concept of disaster governance as introduced by Tierney (2012) – as it involves multiple organisational and institutional actors – and the concept of disaster politics (Olson, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2010). The latter in particular as the development of this structure has been put into motion in the aftermath of Luis. It therefore highlights an example of how a disaster – in this case hurricane Luis – could stimulate the restructuring of the political system by the development of a security apparatus in the form of a disaster governance structure, aiming at reducing risks opposing the population. The functioning of this structure during Hurricane Irma will be highlighted within the next paragraphs.

## ***5.2 Description of Irma and preparation done before Irma***

Irma was the first category five to hit the Leeward Island within the Caribbean, and it reached a peak intensity of 185 miles per hour (295 kilometres per hour) by which it became the second strongest Atlantic hurricane by wind speed (Shuckburgh, Mitchell, & Stott, 2017) and the longest category five storm of all time across the Atlantic Ocean (Daniell, Mühr, Pomonis, Schäfer, & Mohr, 2017). It devastated multiple Caribbean islands (e.g. Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts, Sint Maarten) before eventually coming ashore on the American South-East coast (damaging especially Florida). It was estimated that the total damage caused by Irma was around 65 billion US dollars (Daniell et al., 2017) of which around 2.7 billion US dollars was the estimated amount on St. Maarten (Government of St. Maarten, 2018). Over 90% of housing was damaged of which around one third was completely destroyed (Netherlands Red Cross, 2017).

Although several precautions were made in order to limit the amount of damage done, it was still immense. Examples of these precautions were sending out radio messages in order to warn the inhabitants for the approaching hurricane and to warn them to make sure that they would have a food supply in the homes, or certain awareness campaigns aiming at again warning the population. Certain preparations start from the beginning of each hurricane season (June). These consist of public warnings from the first of June, going out on daily basis by the government and which are intensified when a storm or hurricane is approaching, and of the Meteorological Department St. Maarten who also sends out updates at least three times a day and again if something is approaching this is intensified. Multiple communication channels were used to communicate these messages.

The preparations from the different ESF groups started on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, as the fire chief summoned all the different coordinators from these groups. From that moment on the operational centre was activated and the disaster management team was activated. Also, the Fire Chief indicated that the different “ESF groups started putting their plans into place and putting their people where they should be and making the necessary plans”<sup>3</sup>. If extra measurements would be needed, then these were requested to the EOC and PM. They made an assessment of what would be necessary and decide if it necessary to send out a request. Such a request was made to get military assistance, as explained by the Fire Chief;

*“... like requesting military assistance, the EOC will decide okay, as the police do you have enough and what do you need, and based on that everybody gives their input to see what is necessary what they need and based on that all the prime minister will draft a letter...requesting military assistance and then the government will send that to the necessary parties who will send it to Den Hague and then they will make the decision okay we will send the marines and assistance”<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Interview fire department chief

<sup>4</sup> Interview fire department chief

This request was followed up as around one hundred Dutch marines were present on the island before and during Irma. They came over from Curaçao and Aruba, together with two navy ships (Zr.MS. Zeeland and Zr.Ms. Pelikaan) who brought in supplies (Westerink, 2017). They supported the fire department and police with different preparations before Irma, such as assessments if the gutters and canals were clean. The local department of the Dutch Red Cross, which is also part of one of the ESF groups, made sure that they would be ready for the impact of Irma, by checking their equipment and making sure volunteers knew what they had to do (Hamers & de Voogd, 2017). The Dutch Red Cross in the Netherlands prepared certain satellite maps of the situation before Irma, which could be used to identify the damage afterwards. Another thing is that of course St. Maarten and the Leeward islands were preparing for the impact of Irma, but the Leeward Antilles (Aruba, Curaçao and Bonaire) were preparing for remote assistance for when Irma would hit the islands<sup>5</sup>. On Curaçao, thousands of food packages and hygiene kits were prepared and made available and on Aruba and Bonaire volunteers were mobilised and everything was done to make sure that help could be provided (Netherlands Red Cross, 2017).

Then on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, Irma hit St. Maarten earlier in the morning. It lasted for around a couple of hours and the eye of Irma went right over the island (see figure 7). As stated previously Irma caused a tremendous amount of damage as indicated by figure 6. Made by the Dutch Red Cross, it shows how many inhabitants' houses were damaged or even destroyed. Many of these were located in highly vulnerable areas, both related to the physical environment and the financial capability of the people living there. As a result, many of the houses were severely damaged Annex 4 contains several images taken shortly after Irma passed. It gives an impression of the amount of damage done to the islands and their inhabitants. As an interviewee describes when driving on the island shortly after Irma;

*“While we are driving out there it feels like we are in a movie, you don’t see the mountains no more, everything was brown, and the buildings were just frameworks”<sup>6</sup>.*

Where normally the island looked green, after the hurricane most of vegetation was defoliated and many large trees were knocked down (DCNA, 2017). So, the overall impact was of such a scale that immediately support would be necessary to provide emergency aid. In the first couple of days there was a lack of water and food as many of the supplies were destroyed.

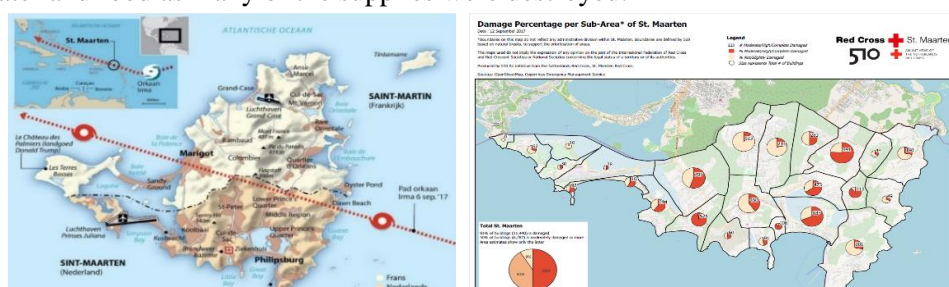


Figure 7 Route of the eye of Irma (Red Cross, 2018) Figure 6 Indication of damage per neighbourhood (Red Cross, 2017)

<sup>5</sup> Interview NGO employee

<sup>6</sup> Interview 1. resident of St. Maarten

### ***5.3 Response after Irma***

#### ***5.3.1 First emergency response***

##### ***5.3.1.1 Governmental organisations***

The first emergency response to assist the inhabitants was not very structured and there were quite a few issues which hindered this process. One of them was that due to the hurricane all communication measurements were destroyed, and the electricity network was down as well, which resulted in communication from and to the island being very limited and difficult. This in combination of the absence of emergency network communication poles, resulted in quite some discussion on communicating the needs and what help was needed, which hindered the emergency response. Even though when it became possible to connect with the ‘outside world’ it was still of great difficulty to get the first emergency aid to the island. This because the airport and harbour were severely damaged and were not fully ready for usage for a couple of days. The landing strip and terminals of the airport were completely destroyed and the same happened to the harbour as most of the cranes were severely damaged, resulting in not being operational to support the first incoming emergency aid. Within a timespan of just a couple of hours Irma isolated St. Maarten completely and made communication and transportation to and from the island nearly impossible. Another issue was that due to the small size of the island, there were no possibilities to buy any supplies and goods on the island itself. St. Maarten was dependent on the emergency aid coming in. And not only the island was depended on this but also neighbouring islands Saba and St. Eustatius, as both use St. Maarten as an important link in their supply routes. Therefore it was not only of importance for St. Maarten but also for St. Eustatius and Saba that transportation of goods would be restored, otherwise all island could end up in an isolated situation with tremendous effects on their populations (Hamers & de Voogd, 2017). Another issue hindering emergency response were new approaching storms. Hurricanes Jose and Maria approached St. Maarten shortly after Irma passed. However luckily both hurricanes did not cause the same damage as Irma did, as both of them passed at a distance. They did however hinder emergency aid operations as these had to be stopped for safety reasons (Hamers & de Voogd, 2017).

To tackle these issues the priority of the Dutch Army was at that time to help reconstruct critical infrastructure, to make sure humanitarian aid could reach the island. Therefore, the Dutch military cleared the landing strip of the Princess Juliana Airport, and as an effect of this the first planes could land on St. Maarten which would bring in well needed quantities of fresh water and food supplies, which were especially in the first few days very scarce. It was therefore of importance that the first planes and ships would bring in these supplies. The first planes send by the military were filled with extra water and food supplies together with extra troops which were sent to help maintain a certain safety level, keeping people from looting and help reconstructing the present damaged critical infrastructure. Simultaneously Dutch support ship ‘Pelikaan’ arrived in the harbour, carrying water and food supplies together with the first extra military forces. The 80 marines which were sent to St. Maarten joined forces



together with already present marines (100), who were already there before Irma (Riemens, 2017). As mentioned their main priority was during the first days to maintain a certain safety level. This was especially of importance shortly after Irma, as many people had started looting from stores. Even stores which were not damaged during the hurricane were damaged afterwards due to looting. One of the interviewees gave an example of a local supermarket;

*“It was not like the building was totally damaged. It was more than just this peace was broken or something and then they took advantage of that. I think if that did not happen, they should have been up and running by now”<sup>7</sup>.*

Another example was given by one of the other interviewees;

*“They had a supermarket here as well which they cleaned out, they just cleaned them out. A little boy came by me and he told me that they are going to break down the Chinese supermarket and they are going to mash up the door. Nothing was wrong with the door, they just break it up”<sup>8</sup>.*

This lasted for a couple of days after which the police and marines managed to control the situation. These looting activities were able to develop and continue in the first few days as a result of miscommunication between different parties (e.g. the St. Maarten Government, St. Maarten police force, the Dutch Army) responsible for the safety of the inhabitants. These parties did not manage to communicate the main priorities within the first few days after Irma. It can however not be stated that the plundering activities could have been prevented entirely, as the lootings were well organised and occurred on an extensive scale, but more efficient communication would have made it possible to reduce the effects<sup>9</sup>.

#### *5.3.1.2 Non-governmental organisations*

Another organisation providing first emergency aid directly after Irma was the St. Maarten department of the Dutch Red Cross. As stated previously, they prepared their volunteers for Irma and made sure that they could go out straight after it has passed. These volunteers reported themselves on different locations shortly after Irma and started handing out the at that moment emergency supplies. Simultaneously the Dutch Red Cross in Curaçao and Aruba were ready to help. In the first weeks after the storm around 50 Red Cross volunteers were present on the island who gave assistance to the people and were giving necessary first aid (Netherlands Red Cross, 2017). They also handed out certain materials and emergency kits, intended to help affected people. Simultaneously, the Red Cross in the

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<sup>7</sup> Interview 1. resident of St. Maarten

<sup>8</sup> Interview community leader Dutch Quarter

<sup>9</sup> Interview head section disaster management

Netherlands opened up a GIRO campaign, to which Dutch citizens could donate money to which would be used to provide emergency assistance, which raised around €20 million (Netherlands Red Cross, 2018). In total the Dutch Red Cross helped, according to their own calculations, 26,701 people with emergency assistance, and they distributed around 116,738 litres of water, 8,088 food parcels and 11,828 tarpaulins (Netherlands Red Cross, 2017). These tarpaulins were needed as around 90% of housing had been damaged severely, with many completely losing their roof. Therefore, it was essential that these people received tarpaulins to function as a replacement of their roofs. Other NGOs were also present, however certain issues occurred regarding the coordination of their activities.

Next to the Red Cross, other organisations such as Cordaid, Samaritan Purse, Caritas International, UNICEF, United Nations and K1 Britannia provided emergency aid and assistance. They offered help in multiple ways, such as by offering money to support certain activities or by sending in actual man power to help on the ground. However well meaning, certain issues arose, as there was a lack of coordination between the local government and these organisations. This was indicated by the head of the disaster management section on St. Maarten. He stated;

*“After every disaster you will get well-meant and less well-meant emergency support, and especially for ESF seven, they were completely engulfed by the Dutch Red, Cross, ecclesiastical organizations, United Nations and XYZ organisations, and they were completely disturbed by it, and because it was not well organised they did not know what to do with this situation. The Red Cross had always been there, but we had never seen organisations like the UN before”<sup>10</sup>.*

So due to a lack of coordination and experience they was not a clear image present on the island what the different NGOs were doing and there was even not a clear image of which NGOs were present and why. This was also highlighted by an employee of one of the NGO present on the island;

*“What often happens with disasters is that you lose all coordination on the extra parties coming in, and that is actually what happened here on St. Maarten. So many organisations were coming in with people wanting to help, but at a certain moment there was not coordination”<sup>11</sup>.*

An example of such an organisation was given by the head of the disaster management section;

*“At a certain moment we heard that there was a search and rescue team from Colombia present. From Colombia, what are they doing here? Nobody asked for them, but they just came and then we heard from them. At a certain moment we said this is not necessary and we did not ask for this and a*

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<sup>10</sup> Interview head section disaster management

<sup>11</sup> Interview NGO employee

*search and rescue team is not needed anyway as there were no people covered underneath collapsed buildings etc. And if you take a lot of them then you have to take care of them, housing etc. We could not put our self in that position, we just pretended that we did not know anything and then they will leave by themselves again. And that is what happened”<sup>12</sup>.*

It eventually took around two weeks before there was any form of coordination as at that moment all the different NGOs present were assigned to the different ESF groups. This was done by the St. Maarten government in collaboration with an Urban Search and Rescue team from the Netherlands (USAR), who provided additional support with coordinating<sup>13</sup>.

However other problems also occurred. As explained by the disaster management, they actually had two issues with Irma. Firstly, the action plans of the ESF groups were not all present. Although the system itself was working properly, the people on the ground did not know what to do<sup>14</sup>. The coordinators knew what to do, together with the people directly involved, but the people working on the ground did not know what to do. These ESF are since 2000/2002 by law obligated to have a worked-out action plan in place, however many do not have this plan present. The disaster management head describes the situation as the following;

*“That was the big problem.... We do not have a stick to beat with, it is difficult to give a fine to a colleague. If the public administrators also do not take this responsibility, then not much will happen”<sup>15</sup>.*

The public administration on the island was not actively making sure that every ESF would have a functioning action plan in place. This fits within earlier explained issues regarding a lack of (spatial planning) regulations and a lack of control by the governmental bodies, resulting in an in some aspects disjointed and unstructured first response.

What also played an important role within the first response phase is that most of the emergency workers were also victims of Irma. Some of them lost their house/roof or had children back at home. They still came to work, however this stopped at a certain moment as they had to think about their own situation, which hindered the first response phase. A striking example of this was that the former Prime Minister, William Marlin, disappeared after Irma as he was in shock. There was no communication between him and the ministers, which resulted in the malfunctioning of the public administration. The disappearance of the PM also has quite tremendous effects for the disaster management structure, as the PM is responsible for making decisions. As a result, the governor on St. Maarten took over the situation

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<sup>12</sup> Interview head section disaster management

<sup>13</sup> Interview NGO employee

<sup>14</sup> Interview head section disaster management

<sup>15</sup> Idem

and appointed the council of ministers as head of the disaster management structure. This resulted however in some issues as the head of the structure became instead of one person making the final decision, five persons discussing about these decisions before making them. The head of the disaster management section described the situation as the following;

*“This system without the prime minister was still functioning, but now the fire chief had to report and go together with his people to the council of ministers, but the politicians did not understand what was going on and were coming up with more questions, resulting in him coming back again. Normally there is only one person in charge and not five, that is the whole idea of disaster management”<sup>16</sup>.*

The result was that certain decisions were not made or being delayed for a considerable time. This together with previous examples is showing that the government of St. Maarten had quite some issues responding in a ‘sufficient’ manner. Issues as a lack of regulations regarding spatial planning and immigration, the lack of the enforcement of certain existing laws and the malfunctioning of public administration in the wake of Irma, have resulted in a disjointed and unstructured response. However due to Irma’s enormous physical force and unpredictability, questionable is however to what extent it is possible to protect and prepare yourself for such a disaster. Nevertheless, these issues are not contributing to increase the level of resilience of the inhabitants or decreasing the level of vulnerability. Therefore, the combination of both these issues and the physical force of Irma have led to the enormous impact of Irma on St. Maarten.

#### *5.3.1.3 National recovery plan*

One of the things established shortly after Irma (14<sup>th</sup> of September) was a National Recovery Plan Workgroup (W-NRP), who were given the task of drafting a National Recovery Plan. This workgroup produced an interim report focussing on a plan of approach regarding the rebuilding and recovery of St. Maarten. Within this report an analysis was made of the economic impact and actions required for the recovery of the communities and economy. The W-NRP estimated that the budget of the government would have a shortfall of around 156 million NAf in 2017 and that this shortfall was estimated to be around 256 million NAf in 2018 and around 233 million NAf in 2019 (W-NRP, 2017)<sup>17</sup>. The main reason for this shortfall is related to the tremendous decrease of the income of the government through taxes, especially related to the tourism industry. It was estimated that in 2018 the originally budget was around 484 million NAf, but the post-Irma estimation was decreased to 248 million NAf. This would be catastrophic for the funds needed for the recovery processes necessary to restore and rebuild the island

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<sup>16</sup> Interview head section disaster management

<sup>17</sup> 1.8 NAf = 1\$ US

again, especially as the estimated total damage was around \$2.7 billion (Government of St. Maarten, 2018).

As a response to help and speed up the recovery on St. Maarten the Dutch government made available a budget of €550 million. Of this budget seven million was made available to finance projects in the first phase of the recovery. These projects (see table 3) were executed by local and international organisations such as the United Nations Development Program, the Red Cross and UNICEF. However, these were small scale projects aiming for providing help to the most vulnerable groups.

*Table 3 First phase recovery projects funded by the Dutch Government*

| <b>Theme</b>                              | <b>Organisation involved</b>                             | <b>Activities</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Repairment of houses</i>               | United Nations Development Program                       | Supporting 500 vulnerable households with the recovery of their damaged houses with materials and expertise                   |
|   | Idem   | Neighbourhood recovery by training jobless youngsters   |
|   | White-Yellow Cross St. Maarten                           | Repairment of 45 houses from clients  |
|   | St. Maarten Development Fund                             | Repairment of around 100 houses of elderly people   |
| <i>Support of children and youngsters</i> | Red Cross  | Schools meals provided to kids on public schools. Breakfast and lunch. Extra three months due to financing from fund          |
|   | UNICEF   | Psychological help to children and youngsters   |
|   | UNICEF & KNVB  | Sports and games. Organising sports activities  |
| <i>Employment opportunities</i>           | White-Yellow Cross St. Maarten & Stichting Zorgverlening | Retraining projects to retrain people who lost their tourism related job to work in construction or in healthcare. 40 persons |
|   | Qcredits   | Microfinancing for (re)starting businesses  |
|   | Red Cross and Startup Solutions                          | From Waste2Work   |
|   | United Nations Development Programme                     | Clean-up St. Maarten  |

The rest of the budget was tied to a special trust fund, to which St. Maarten would get access if they would agree with two conditions proposed by the Dutch government. These were the establishment of an anti-corruption body and that the Dutch government would take over the border control. This will however be described more within the following sub chapter.

### 5.3.2 Long term response

As mentioned previously, as a response to Irma the Dutch Government made available a budget of €550 million to assist St. Maarten. This fund would help financing projects which are needed to speed up the recovery process, which could not be funded by St. Maarten as a result of the shortfall in their national budget. The Dutch Government however posed two conditions to which the St. Maarten Government had to agree in order to receive the trust fund. These two conditions were the following;

1. The establishment of an anti-corruption body for the supervision of the integrity of the government. This with the goal of promoting the transparency and reliability of public administration (Plasterk, 2017);
2. The Dutch Government (Dutch Royal Marechaussee and the Dutch Douane) would take over the border control on St. Maarten. This in order to regulate the criminality and migration issues regarding the border control (Plasterk, 2017).

These were proposed to tackle the earlier mentioned issues present on St. Maarten, related to the integrity of the politicians and level of corruption present within the political system. The St. Maarten government however did not agree with these terms and were not willing to accept these. Within a letter send by Prime minister Marlin to Dutch minister Plasterk, the PM explained that the government would however not (necessarily) oppose to the establishment of an anti-corruption body, but that this could not be established before the given deadline (which was the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2017). In that same letter he stated that he also is in favour for a good border control, but that this should not be intensified at this moment (Marijnissen, 2017b). The Dutch minister responded to this by seeking for telephonic contact between him and PM Marlin. However this phone call did not settle the difference as Marlin send as a response to this a second letter stating that with the posted conditions ‘the Netherlands is keeping the population of St. Maarten hostage’ and that these conditions are ‘not fair’ and ‘unacceptable’ (Marijnissen, 2017a). However several members from the coalition within the St. Maarten parliament, did not agreeing with the proceeding of the PM regarding these two issues (van den Dool & König, 2017). Therefore on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2017 PM Marlin agreed with the conditions posed by the Netherlands, but however the coalition still lost its majority within the parliament as three members gave up their trust in the PM (König & van Oostvoorn, 2017). So, although eventually PM Marlin wanted to agree with the proposed conditions his cabinet still lost its majority, leading into a motion of no confidence towards Marlin. After this motion was accepted new elections were requested, which eventually took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2018. The new cabinet which got into place after these elections started negotiating with the Dutch Government on how the trust fund should be taken care of. Simultaneously the Netherlands started negotiating with the World Bank if they could be able to play a role within the rebuilding processes on St. Maarten, as the Dutch government did not want to give the full responsibility to the St. Maarten government. The World Bank would then manage the €550 million trust fund and would assist the rebuilding with their expertise and knowledge. Eventually after the new cabinet was installed, the agreement between the Netherlands, St. Maarten and the World Bank was signed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April

2018. This agreement entailed that the World Bank would administer the trust fund and will execute projects, and that the St. Maarten government will also submit projects to the World Bank. However also non-governmental organisations can apply for projects. A steering committee, consisting of representatives of the World Bank, St. Maarten and the Netherlands, will decide in consensus if these projects will be executed.

As mentioned the World Bank also provided their expertise regarding the rebuilding and recovery processes, even before the actual grand agreement was signed <sup>18</sup>. This knowledge was used, together with the expertise of the employees of the St. Maarten government, to develop a National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). The NRRP is a document entailing the ‘roadmap towards building Sint Maarten back better’ and it offers a ‘comprehensive strategy to respond to the immediate needs of the people of Sint Maarten and to address other recovery and resilience needs in the near future’(Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 2). It presented an analysis stating the different priorities needed to facilitate the recovery processes. Three different main priorities were identified; (1) the basic needs of the people of St. Maarten – such as food, shelter, health and psychosocial care, education, and livelihoods; (2) the urgent preparations for the peak of the upcoming hurricane season; (3) the multisectoral approach to restarting and revitalizing the economy (Government of St. Maarten, 2018). Multiple sectors were identified within these priorities, to which specific recovery activities were designed. The NRRP highlighted that these activities should be executed in a sustainable manner, and that where possible the principle of Building Back Better (BBB) should be applied. By executing these activities together with BBB principle, the NRRP expects the following outcomes; (1) sustainable recovery of social sectors in all affected communities; (2) restoration of businesses continuity combined with a strategy for fostering and broadening business activity; (3) rehabilitation and reconstruction of critical infrastructure to BBB standards; and (4) strengthening of the country’s readiness to mitigate, respond to and recover from the future impacts of natural disasters and climate change (Government of St. Maarten, 2018).

In order to coordinate the executing of these projects and to enhance the communication between the World Bank and the different ministries, a specific committee was established. This Interim Recovery Committee (IRC) is focussing on issues such as project management, the financial state, and the legal status all in order to make sure that the current different activities and projects are executed ‘smoothly’<sup>19</sup>. It can therefore be seen as a sort of ‘intermediary’ between the ministries and the World Bank, focussing on facilitating the collaboration between the two <sup>20</sup>. The IRC consist of eight to ten different members, who previously worked for different ministries, and it will eventually develop itself into a National Recovery Program Bureau (NRPB).

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<sup>18</sup> Interview Senior government official I

<sup>19</sup> Interview Senior government official II

<sup>20</sup> Idem

So as explained above many different components are part of the trust fund agreement. Therefore a (simplified) visual illustration of this governance construction is shown in figure 8. It highlights how these are related to each other and which steps are necessary to eventually implement certain recovery related projects. The first of the many steps which need to be taken within this process, is the money transfer to the trust fund from the Dutch Government to the World Bank. After this the Government of St. Maarten can present proposals to the World Bank, highlighting how they would like to spend the money present in the trust fund. This proposal is then being send via the World Bank to the Steering Committee. In order for the proposal to pass, the three different members need to unanimously approve it. They are assisted by a technical working group, which provides technical support. If the Steering Committee gives its approval, then the proposal will again be revised by the World Bank and eventually they will sign a grant agreement for that specific project, meaning that the budget to execute the project will be made available. As mentioned the IRC, eventually the NRPB, are then responsible for the coordination, planning and implementation of these projects. Therefore, they are working together closely with the ministries and the World Bank, in order to ensure that projects are implemented in a sufficient manner. These procedures have resulted into the signing of several grant agreements (see annex 3).

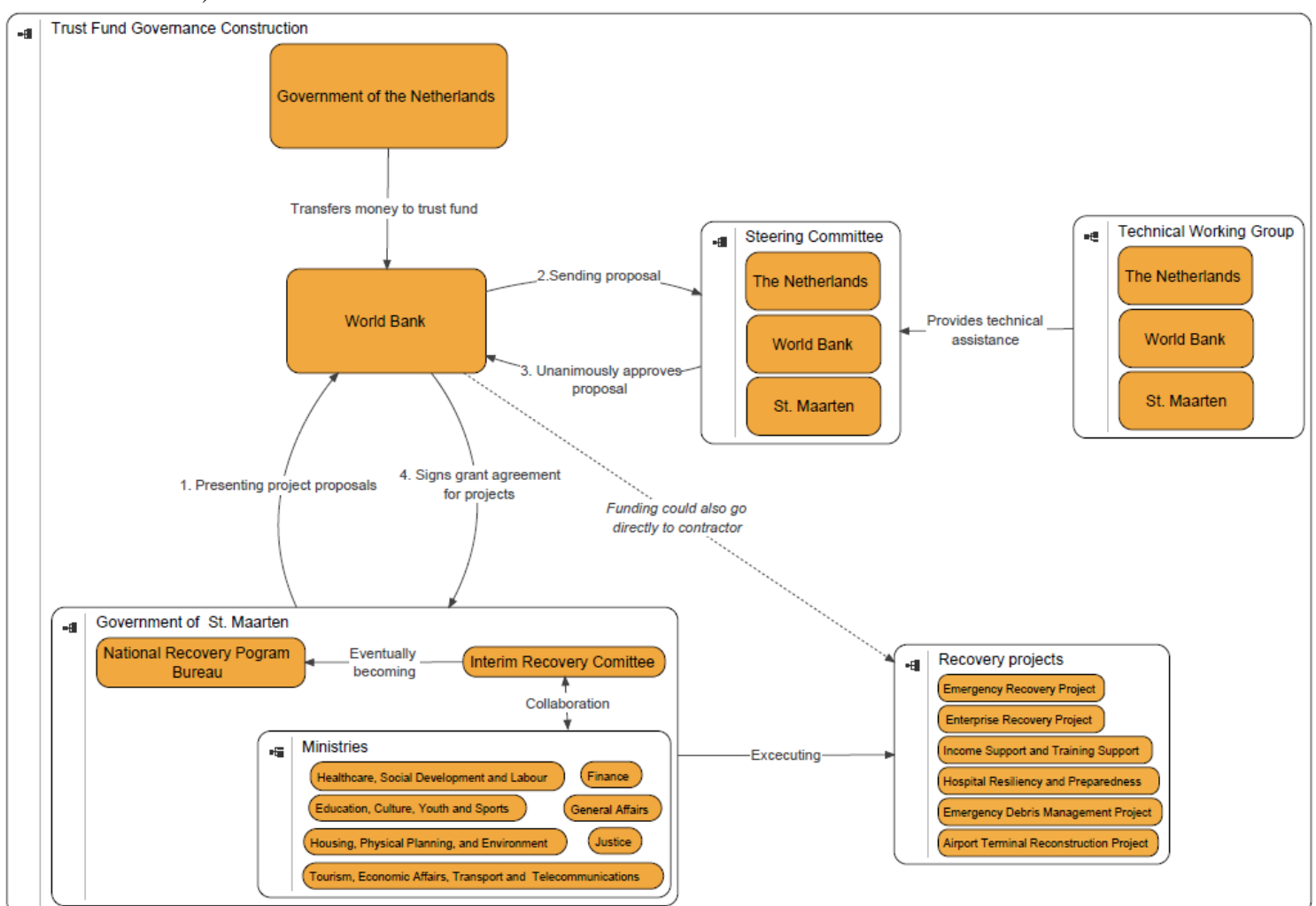


Figure 8 Visual illustration of trust fund governance structure (own illustration)



### 5.3.3 The link to disaster politics and biopolitics

The establishment of the trust fund governance structure and the interim recovery committee were both developments happening in the aftermath of Irma. Both events being or advocating political changes within the current governance structure on St. Maarten. Therefore, the earlier description on the creation of both governance structures could be analysed through the concepts of biopolitics and politics of disaster. Both notions explaining that the response to a disaster could advocated a change within a specific context, resulting in the creation of new forms of governmentality advocating a form of biopower. The two conditions set by the Dutch government to St. Maarten which they had to agree to in order to receive access to the trust fund, have been a point of debate already before Irma but have never been implemented. As highlighted by Pelling & Dill “disaster event and their management are part of unfolding political histories” (2010, p. 21). Therefore, the unfolding political history between both countries have led to the creation of these conditions, leading eventually into the fall of the St. Maarten government and the establishment of the trust fund governance structure. Consequently the response of St. Maarten (and its related issues) together with the response of the Netherlands have highlighted how the aftermath of a disaster can potentially restructure political systems and the governable space they occupy, or as stated by Pelling & Dill “Recent large disasters have highlighted both the importance of political context and the possibility that disaster impact and response can influence subnational, national and international politics” (2010, p. 34). The arising of this form of governmentality and biopolitics – its governmental concern over human populations – was thus created by Irma, which created a space in which political changes could occur. However, this new governance structure implied certain implications regarding the execution of the projects aiming at rebuilding and recovering St. Maarten. How these effects are affecting the effectivity of the projects and are hindering the recovery processes will be described in the following paragraphs.

#### 5.3.4 Implications regarding the trust fund

One of these implications is related to the bureaucratic procedures and regulations from the World Bank. The different steps involved within this process are time taking steps, due to the different procedures and regulations. A Senior government official explained that the process from the identification of a problem to the signing of a grant agreement of a World Bank project normally takes around one to two years<sup>21</sup>. This was however different for St. Maarten, as the first grant agreements were signed in July and August 2018. This was the result of an intense collaboration between mission teams of the World Bank, the different St. Maarten ministries & IRC and involved stakeholders. They together discussed in depth what the first projects should entail, and they identified the main goals. Therefore, the first steps for the first projects – the *Emergency Recovery Project*, *Income Support and Training Support Project* and the *Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness project* – were executed in a ‘record time’ between March and July 2018, which eventually led to the signing of the grant agreements<sup>22</sup>. The signing of these agreements did however not result directly into the implementation of the projects, as the technical documents were lacking which made it difficult to send out tenders. Another problem was related to the lack of capacity present within the government of St. Maarten<sup>23</sup>. This was highlighted during interviews with government officials, as one of them explained;

*“We are now working with 8-10 persons, where a normal World Bank project with the scale of around 30 million has around the same amount of people only on procurement and financial management.”*<sup>24</sup>

Another example was highlighted by interviewee who explained how the procedures and regulations posed by the World Bank are pressing on the personal of the VROMI ministry;

*“Dealing with their very strict rules and regulations on how things get done and the procedures that you have to follow in order to get them done, they are pressing on our capabilities and our available staffing and a lot of things take much longer as a result.”*<sup>25</sup>

Both quotes indicate how the trust fund governance construction has created certain implications and issues, which were not encountered before by the personal of the St. Maarten government. Another implication related to this latter issue is the communication between the different parties and organisations involved. One of the interviewees highlighted that the communication between the World Bank and the government of St. Maarten is being affected by the ‘complexity’ of the trust fund

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<sup>21</sup> Interview Senior government official II

<sup>22</sup> Idem

<sup>23</sup> Idem

<sup>24</sup> Idem

<sup>25</sup> Interview Senior government official VROMI

construction<sup>26</sup>. This complexity is again related to the procedures and regulations. Where the Netherlands already had experience dealing with the World Bank and its procedures, St. Maarten did not have any involvement before with the World Bank and its working methods. The same goes for the World Bank, as they did not work previously together with the St. Maarten (both before and after 10-10-10). In other words, both parties have to get to know each other. One of the interviewees described it as the following

*“The World Bank has no previous relationship with St. Maarten, does not know the market, does not know the island. Don't know the key people, that's a whole new relationship.”<sup>27</sup>*

As a result, certain issues arose around the collaboration between the different ministries, IRC and World Bank. It was difficult for the different ministries to get understand the different and new procedures proposed by the World Bank. The same goes for the World Bank, as highlighted by the previous quote. As some sort of middlemen, the IRC was struggling with communicating between the two parties. This is highlighted by an interviewee;

*“We are now working full time on this project for a couple of months and we still have our old job, and you can see that it took us a lot of time to understand how the collaboration in organised and what type of organisation the World Bank is and what kind of policies they use ..... these kind of policies together with the fact that we are still scanning and beginning to understand, are making it difficult to communicate these through to people which you only see one or two days a week and sometimes perhaps even less than one or two hours.”<sup>28</sup>*

Listening to these quotes it could be stated that government of St. Maarten does not have the capacity and or expertise to carry out the reconstruction projects. Personal of the ministries have to work on both the implementation and preparation of these new projects, while still carrying out their ‘regular’ everyday tasks, making it difficult to satisfy the World Bank regarding the different posed criteria and procedures. Therefore, it could be stated that the chosen trust fund governance structure – which has been specifically designed to respond to the devastation caused by Irma – has resulted into the delay of the implementation of reconstruction projects. This will be illustrated by the following sub chapter.

#### *5.3.4.1 Implications regarding the implementation of projects*

As mentioned above the (mis)communication between the different organisations involved and the limited (personal) capacity of the St. Maarten government have made an impact on the implementation

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<sup>26</sup> Interview Senior government official I

<sup>27</sup> Interview Senior government official I

<sup>28</sup> Interview Senior government official II

time of the different proposed projects. An example of this could be highlighted through the execution of *Emergency Recovery Project I*. This project was one of the first being designed and it entails multiple components aiming on the recovery of St. Maarten (see Annex 3). One of the subcomponents was focussing on the reconstruction and repairment of (public) housing and buildings, as many of these suffered a tremendous amount of damage during Irma. It is aiming on repairing 300 houses which are severely damaged and belonging to vulnerable groups within society – based on administrative, socio-economic and economic criteria and procedures acceptable to the World Bank (World Bank, 2018e). Although the grant agreement was signed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2018, the actual implementation phase did not start until January/February 2018. This did however not result in the immediate repairment of the 300 houses, as indicated by one of the interviewees;

*“We have signed something in July and we are not five/six months further in time, and I think that we can really see the first projects getting started within January/February. However, I am not immediately talking about the 300 roofs, the first package consists of fourteen roofs, to see if the chosen approach works out and if we should continue it with any learned lessons.”*<sup>29</sup>

As a result of the project related bureaucracy, no houses have been repaired in the first one and a half year after Irma. And the houses which are planned on being repaired are only a certain percentage of the damaged houses. Inhabitants who have a severely damaged house can only apply for the assistance through the fund if they fit within certain criteria. These criteria are related to the level of income of the and the administrative status (legal or illegal) of the applicants and were based on the criteria and procedures acceptable to the World Bank. As a result, certain people were identified as being certified to these criteria, and therefore qualified on participating with projects executed by the government. However, the group of people who did not qualify for participating was of a considerable amount. This group consisted mainly of illegal migrants living and working in St. Maarten and people who did not qualify as their income was too high. As a result, these groups are facing certain issues coping and recovering from the effects of Irma. The following chapter will therefore focus on what the effects are – regarding the population of St. Maarten – of the created governance structure.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview Senior government official II

## 6. Result of the disaster response

The last few chapters have mainly focussed on the governance structure regarding the trust fund construction, and how this led to certain bureaucratic procedures hindering decision making and execution of projects. This chapter therefore focusses more on what the actual implications are of this chosen structure. It details how community members have experienced the different efforts on decreasing the level of vulnerability or the increase of resiliency on St. Maarten. The focus is on the housing situation, health issues, working programs, and how St. Maarten could potentially develop in the future. Different text boxes explain how community members experienced certain efforts. These entail different narratives which were captured during the fieldwork period. They highlight that not many community members experienced much help coming directly from the trust fund.

### 6.1 *The housing situation on St. Maarten*

Many people have not experienced a lot of help coming directly from the trust fund, as nearly no money has been spent on the implementation of projects, even 1.5 years after Irma struck. The effects of this are visible throughout the entire island, and in particular, when analysing the housing conditions of people. Many people suffered from Irma, with around 90% of the housing being damaged. One of the main results of the involved bureaucracy – brought in by the trust fund construction – is that many people are still living in housing situations that have suffered severe damage. These conditions differ from leaking windows, to leaking roofs or to not having a roof at all. Most of the people who are still suffering, do not have the financial nor the physical capacity to rebuild their homes. As one of the respondents stated when describing the situation within the Cole Bay region:

*“A lot of people, a lot of unfortunate people, basically minimum wage and a lack of fund and know-how, they are still suffering. We still have a lot of people in the community who have not got it back together yet.”*<sup>30</sup>

Many of these people are illegal and undocumented on St. Maarten. This group has been hit hard by Irma, as she damaged both their houses and their financial capacity. Their houses in general were not constructed using the strongest materials, with most of them built illegally and remaining unregistered, and typically are located in vulnerable areas (e.g. hill slopes). They were also hit hard financially, as the majority of this group was working in the tourism industry before Irma. These people lost their job, as the tourism industry was hit hard, and many hotels had to be closed. Box 1 describes the story of Maria, explaining the situation she has been living in since Irma.

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<sup>30</sup> Interview community leader Cole Bay

### Box 1 – The story of Maria

Maria is a 27-year-old woman originating from Guyana who migrated to St. Maarten a couple of years back. Since she moved, she started working in the tourism industry, cleaning hotels rooms. The main reason for her to move to St. Maarten was an economic one, as she felt like her and her daughter's lives would improve considerably. She moved into a simple rental apartment located in Cole Bay, renting from a landlord who owned multiple apartments. This situation changed however as Irma devastated St. Maarten. Maria lost her income as the hotel she was working at had to close due to the severe damage, and her rental apartment suffered too as it lost its roof, windows and doors. As a result, Maria and her daughter were struggling to recover from Irma. This situation has not changed much 16 months after the hurricane, as even though Maria has had some small side jobs, she has not managed to find a full-time job, and her apartment has hardly been repaired. The latter as she did not have any money to afford repairs and neither did the landlord, as he did not have the financial capacity to repair the apartment in a sufficient manner. Therefore, the roof is still missing and still had a tarpaulin as a replacement. And to top it off, the rent was raised as well (due to a shortage of rental apartments/houses). Maria and her daughter are now living there in these difficult conditions, which seem hopeless as they do not have the possibility for improvement. Therefore, she tried applying for several recovery programs organised by the government. However, she got rejected every time as she did not have the (legal) papers to apply for these. Therefore, Maria and her daughter are still suffering from the effects of Irma, feeling mistreated as she did not manage to apply for any recovery programs;

*“What I would have want to happen, if everybody could have been treated equally, because all of us went through that trauma. It is not like the people without papers were safer, everybody was in danger”*

It highlights the different problems Maria is facing and which many others on St. Maarten are also facing. These community members are denied access to the projects initiated by the trust fund and are denied access from help in general by the government, as they do not qualify to the set criteria. One of the interviewees explained her feeling as follows;

*“You know the people with the papers they have the first preference, but we were here, we got hit too. I know we broke the law, but we were here, we were helping too. We got affected too. At least they could have done something”<sup>31</sup>*

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<sup>31</sup> Interview 1. resident of St. Maarten

She explained that when asking directly for help at any of the government offices;

*“They advise you if you don’t have papers, you are illegal on the island, so leave the island”*<sup>32</sup>

This latter statement is clearly linked to the theory of governmentality, in which Foucault explained how biopower claims to ‘make live and to let die’ (Foucault, 1978, 1997). The illegal undocumented community present on St. Maarten is not receiving help from the government or from the newly established governmental apparatus (national recovery bureau), advocating a form of biopower in which this community is not ‘allowed’ to receive help. So, they are not intervening even though they could, therefore – using Foucault’s vocabulary – let this community ‘die’. Consequently, they are treated as if they are disposable. This resulted in many community members still suffering unnecessarily from the effects of Irma.

One of the groups within the community that did receive help were the elderly. This was however, not directly initiated via governmental organisations, but via NGOs present on St. Maarten<sup>33</sup>. They provided elderly people with materials to repair their houses and roofs, and in some cases assisted them with the actual repair. However, the latter was not always the case, as many of the elderly did receive materials but not the so called ‘man-power’ to repair their houses. Box 2 explains two different stories of both Carl and Jessica, who both received help but dealt with it differently.

#### **Box 2 – The story of Carl and Jessica**

Carl has been living in Dutch Quarter for his entire life. Since his retirement Carl has struggled with certain health issues and as result ended up in a wheelchair. Irma damaged his house tremendously, leaving it without a roof. With the help from NGOs his roof was replaced by a tarpaulin. After living underneath this tarpaulin, a local NGO provided him with building materials to rebuild and recover his house. However, as he is not able to rebuild it himself, he has to find somebody else who could help him. This has however turned out to be quite problematic, as most people are charging wages for their efforts, making it too expensive for Carl to repair his roof. Therefore, he has received help from different NGOs, but is still struggling due to his economic and physical status. The same goes for Jessica who is also living in Dutch Quarter. She was in the same situation, but luckily received help from family members and her neighbours who were willing to help her out. Therefore, she managed to repair her house and roof. So, with the help of the NGOs and family members/neighbours she can live in a normal house again.

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<sup>32</sup> Idem

<sup>33</sup> Interview community leader Cole Bay

However, other parts of the community did not receive much help, as the community leader from Cole Bay explains;

*“There was an organisation that was helping the elderly, but they were mostly focussing on the elderly. [...] They were mostly focussing on a specific group, like the old people’s homes and stuff like that. We understand that yes, but there are also people that are not in that state, but they are living hand to hand and mouth to mouth pay check, and they also need assistance. But it seems to me that they were forgotten someway somehow”<sup>34</sup>*

There is thus a large group within the community that did not experience help from any governmental organisations, or via the trust fund. As the community leader from Dutch Quarter highlighted, most of the houses which have been restored, were financed by people themselves or with the help of non-governmental organisations (Marijnissen, 2019). These NGOs did not however have the financial capacity to provide the necessary aid to the needy<sup>35</sup>. Therefore box 3 highlights a case in which a family has not received the necessary help.

### **Box 3 – The story of the David and his family**

Within Dutch Quarter, a family is living next to the main road. The family consists of father David, who is working in construction, stay at home mom Michelle, together with son Oscar and daughter Sarah (who has been handicapped since birth). Their house was severely damaged during Irma, mashing up their roof, windows, doors and furniture. As a result, they had to give up their savings and repair their house and furniture as much as possible. This however was difficult as these costs were too high, making it difficult to repair their roof. Therefore, they replaced their roof with a tarpaulin, giving them, some cover for rain and wind. This temporary solution is however far from perfect as water is leaking and dripping through when there is a heavy rain storm. And even though it was placed as an emergency solution to cover up the roof, it has not been replaced as the family cannot afford it. They also applied for one of the recovery programs but were denied as they did not meet the set criteria (due to a too high income). Consequently, this family is still living in challenging circumstances 16 months later and struggling with the aftermath of Irma.



<sup>34</sup> Idem

<sup>35</sup> Interview NGO employee



## 6.2 Health issues

One of the biggest issues on St. Maarten before Irma was related to the dump situation on Pond Island. As a result of the lack of waste treatment facilities, an enormous garbage ‘hill’ was created nearby Philipsburg. This ‘temporary solution’ emerged around 30 years ago, and continued to grow for many years, containing not only household garbage, but also toxic waste (e.g. car tires). The mismanagement of the dump also led to fires occurring on the site, therefore polluting toxic gasses into the open air. The dump developed into a health risk for neighbouring communities and nature areas, which in turn was only magnified after Irma.

Most of the debris from Irma could not be processed and was thrown on top of the dump. The result was that the ‘old’ dump became overloaded with garbage and debris, leading to the development of the ‘baby dump’ next to the old dump location. The quantity of fires occurring on the dump site also increased. These fires are more and more disturbing and threaten the lives of community members. Box 4 explains how this impact is experienced by one of the community members. This problem will remain present for the coming years as a solution is still lacking. Even though a trust fund project is aiming to solve this issue, it mainly provides long-term solutions. A short-term solution included in the project however is related to combatting the fires, which could (temporarily) reduce the problem for Anthony and his family. However, as a result of the bureaucracy regarding the trust fund no actions have yet been taken, leaving the dump a threat to the community’s health.

### Box 4 – The story of Anthony and his family

Anthony and his family have lived close to Fort Williams, on the western side of Philipsburg, for many years. They are living there without many concerns, although their house is closely located to the dump situated in Philipsburg. As a result of the problems related to the dump, the family is suffering from occasional smoke coming from dump fires, which contains harmful chemicals and are increasing possible health issues. This had not been much of an issue previously, however after Irma the intensity of the fires increased as the debris was moved and burned on the dump site. These fires are now threatening his and his families’ health, forcing them to move to another house in case the smoke gets too much. To illustrate the problem regarding the dump, Anthony often wears a shirt stating, ‘I survived Irma only to be poisoned by the dump’.



### 6.3 Training program

Where the emergency recovery project is still in the preparation phase, the support and training support program (*Skills & Training*) got off the ground more quickly. This recovery project funded by the trust fund aimed at providing a temporary income, improving the employability of affected sectors, and to strengthen the social protection system. This was of importance as many people on the island lost their jobs, due to the damaged tourism industry as a result of Irma. Even the ones who managed to keep their jobs were still facing unemployment, as their employers were also struggling financially. Therefore, the *Skills & Training* projects was one of the first projects being submitted and executed. The project was financed by different hotels on St. Maarten at first, but it turned out untenable and a fund was made available through the trust fund. This was possible within a short time frame, as the project plan was already present and ready to be submitted. The program provided different training programs which employees of the participating companies could attend. They were designed to (re)train employees who were losing sight on retaining their jobs. It offered them different lessons, and a stipend (around 40-50% of their salary) if they would attend a certain percentage of these lessons. As a result, many of the hotel employees managed to retain their jobs, (part of) their salaries and health insurance. However, many illegal undocumented people are also working within the tourism sector, and thus working at these different hotels. This group was however not included in the (re)training program as they did not possess the right papers. As one of the interviewees explained;

*“They had these workshops where you could go study and you would receive a stipend. Like that they had a lot of programs, and they still have these programs in which they could help people. But the people who are living here without papers they did not benefit from that at all”<sup>36</sup>*

Again – as with the emergency recovery project focussing on housing – these community members did not receive any help, as the requirements stated that legal papers were a necessity. This (again) fits within the ‘to make and to let die’ argument linked to Foucault’s biopower argument. Certain parts of the community are receiving help, while others are being neglected and have to take care of everything themselves. As a result, these community members are becoming even more vulnerable. Box 5 highlights how two employees of a hotel experienced the aftermath regarding their working position, and how they experienced the offered help.

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<sup>36</sup> Interview 1. resident of St. Maarten

### **Box 5 – The story of Olivia and Stephanie**

Olivia and Stephanie have been working at a hotel long before Irma hit St. Maarten. Together with many others they make sure that the guest rooms are clean, together with the rest of the hotel. However, due to Irma the hotel was damaged severely and lost many of its rooms. The tourist season for the coming year was ruined, as guests could not be hosted in the hotel anymore. As a result, there was not much work for the employees, resulting in the possible dismissals of several employees such as Olivia and Stephanie. Luckily Olivia and many others were offered a place in one of the training programs, giving them an opportunity to (re)train certain aspects of their profession, and offering them 40-50% of their salary as a stipend. Stephanie on the other hand was not invited to this program. The reason being was that he did not have any legal papers, making it impossible to apply for a position in the (re)training program.

*“For those programs, you are going to see that they have workshops and vacancies, they have everything, but the requirement is that you will have to need papers”*

#### **6.4 Future development of St. Maarten**

Irma has highlighted the economic vulnerability of St. Maarten, as most of the economic activities are focussed on the tourism industry. Since the start of the development of tourism since the 1960s, St. Maarten has been growing more and more within this industry. However, this (unlimited) growth in combination with the lack of regulations and enforcement have put St. Maarten in a vulnerable position, which became visible during and after Irma. As a result the NRRP has highlighted that “it will be important to explore options for diversifying the economy of Sint Maarten” (Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 6). The same view was highlighted by several interviewees, who emphasised the importance of economic diversification;

*“Tourism is fine, but we need something else, something like agriculture that would create other job opportunities”<sup>37</sup>*

*“Well that is depending on the government, there is a point where the government needs to put in a stop. You take the things that you need, and you scrap the things that you do not need. You have to go into business that are going to give a profit, not only for the persons that wants to do business, but also to do some good for the island.”<sup>38</sup>*

*“They should look for other sources to make money. I don’t think tourism will work. A lot of people who have villas and condos, they sell it out and they go and invest somewhere else. Because if another category 3 or 4 would hit us here, this would be completely gone”<sup>39</sup>*

The diversification of the economy could potentially make St. Maarten less economically vulnerable to certain disasters. The question is however, how this could be realized, especially as more Caribbean islands are facing the same issue. Examples of this are found on the neighbouring islands St. Barthelemy and St. Kitts & Nevis, who both have tourism as their main industry. St. Maarten could potentially focus on expanding certain industries. Examples of this could be found on St. Eustatius or on Curacao, where both of the majority of the population works at an oil refinery. This would however be difficult on St. Maarten as there is already a lack of space;

*“That is the problem, where for example Curaçao is a bigger island and can maintain an oil refinery and can accommodate the people who are working there, we cannot do that as we are way too small for that. We do not even have a place to process our garbage.”<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>37</sup> Interview 3. resident of St. Maarten

<sup>38</sup> Interview 2. resident of St. Maarten

<sup>39</sup> Interview 1. resident of St. Maarten

<sup>40</sup> Interview Senior government official II

The (unlimited) growth of tourism has pushed St. Maarten into a direction from which it can be difficult to change direction. Most of the present infrastructure is focussed on facilitating the tourism industry (e.g. hotels, villas, restaurants) or on housing facilitations. This is therefore hindering the process of diversification, as most of the space is occupied. So, in order to change this, certain infrastructural changes must be implemented (e.g. reconstruction of neighbourhoods, hotels, roads). This would however be a very costly process, which would take many years<sup>41</sup>. Not only physical changes would be a necessity, but also for the reason that diversification of the economy can also potentially negatively affect existing sectors (Berezin, Salehizadeh, & Santana, 2002). As Berezin et al (2002) highlight;

*“If government policy to encourage diversification causes resources to be channelled away from sectors that enjoy a comparative advantage, this may impede efficiency” (2002, p. 5)*

The existing tourism sector could possibly be affected if economic diversity is promoted. It is thus unlikely that present organisations, businesses and compagnies focussing on tourism will support the development of economic diversity. Therefore, the government would have to invest in making the economy more diverse. It is however not as simple as it seems. After Irma, St. Maarten lost most of its income as of a result of the declining tourism sector. This resulted in a shortfall in the national budget, making it difficult to finance and promote any economic diversification. In addition, the trust fund construction has not been designed to promote these kinds of issues. Although the NRRP has identified it as being of importance, one of the interviewees highlighted that this responsibility still lies with the government itself;

*“If we will indicate that then they are willing to think about it, but the thing is that the trust fund is mainly there to nullify the effects of Irma and not to think about larger development issues, that still remains with the government itself”<sup>42</sup>*

However, the political will (with a few exceptions) regarding the promotion of diversification is lacking within governmental organisations on St. Maarten. As mentioned previously certain members of oligarchic family are still present within or very much linked to politics and are linked to tourism and its development. As a result, politics on St. Maarten are intertwined with achieving personal benefits from this industry and could potentially be negatively affected by economic diversification. It is therefore in their interest that the tourism industry, as before Irma, will be rebuilt, from which they can profit financially once again.

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<sup>41</sup> Interview NGO employee

<sup>42</sup> Interview Senior government official II

The revival of the tourism industry is however not only promoting the rehabilitation of a vulnerable economy on St. Maarten but is also contributing to an increasing level of physical vulnerability. Many business owners have repaired and rebuild their own businesses by themselves, as the government did not show much initiative. However, as highlighted by Marijnissen (2019), many of these enterprises have rebuilt everything exactly as before Irma, making them again vulnerable to storms. Bigger hotel enterprises are however an exception to this, as they used Irma as a way of renovating and rebuilding their hotels in a more resilient manner. This however is being done on their own initiative. Even though these hotels are rebuilt in a more resilient manner, they still remain at the same vulnerable locations, next to sea and close to the beaches.

This rehabilitation is also facilitating economic growth on St. Maarten. However, the combination of economic growth and the lack of regulation and the enforcement of these can (again) potentially create vulnerable situations. However, currently governmental organisations on St. Maarten are working together with several organisations – such as Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (VNG) – on developing certain construction codes which would identify where can and cannot be built. However, in order for this to work, a previously mentioned issue becomes visible;

*“There is a project going on together with VNG to change the construction codes, and to look at the permit system, focussing on where to build and where not and how there should be build. So, we are thinking about that, but at the same time we also need a strong governmental organization to ensure that it is carried out properly. We do not have the capacity to have a very strong government on the island. For that, much more would have to be invested in the capacity of the government”<sup>43</sup>*

This again is hindering the rebuilding and building back better processes. Due to the absence of certain construction codes and the enforcement to implement these, several buildings will be rebuilt while making use of methods and materials which are not considered being more resilient. This thus depends on the financial capacity as well as the will of the owners. So where governmental organisations are focussing on fostering human populations – via certain apparatuses – in order to sustain life, reality is that this has been a laborious process. Therefore, it can be stated that establishment of this new form of governmentality – trust fund construction and the IRC – has not necessarily acted upon the needs of its population. Even though this form of governmentality is aiming at ‘restoring, securing, and strengthening the well-being of the people of Sint Maarten’ (Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 16), reality is that this has not been acted upon due to a lack of capacity – both personally and financially – other interests of governmental actors, and due to the trust fund governance structure. These aspects are again pressing on both the financial and personal capacity of the St. Maarten government. Therefore, in order to fulfil the claim of ‘making life and letting die’ which for this form of governmentality is

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<sup>43</sup> Interview Senior government official I

advocating, it must first solve these issues. This can then eventually lead to the fulfilment of the claim, therefore protecting its population and building on a less vulnerable and more resilient future perspective on St. Maarten.

## 7. Discussion

The previous chapters have attempted to shed light on how disaster governance in combination with St. Maarten's development had an effect on the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma. Therefore, this chapter will aim to connect this to the theoretical framework. Building on the interviews, literature and observations, this thesis argues that a certain form of governmentality on St. Maarten in the aftermath of Irma has led to a situation in which community members have not experienced (much) support from governmental institutions. It is executing a biopolitical response through the development of certain '*apparatuses*', as these are classifying the populations into groups who can or cannot receive help. This is eventually contributing to the increase in vulnerable situations.

These findings seem to fit within the statement that disasters could potentially restructure political systems and the governable space they occupy, which is advocated by the notion of **disaster politics** as described by **Olson (2000)** and **Pelling & Dill (2010)**. Linking this to **Foucault's** notion of **governmentality**, disasters could potentially restructure political systems or advocate certain forms of governmentality. These are then promoting a form of **biopower**, through which the population is fostered and taken care of in order to reduce opposing risks – or as Foucault named it **biopolitics**. Within the theoretical framework multiple theoretical concepts have been introduced, describing this process. Therefore, the following paragraphs will focus on highlighting how these theories and concepts are linked to the case study. Two such concepts are Kelman's disaster diplomacy and Klein's disaster capitalism. The former explains how disaster-related activities do and do not influence peace and conflict processes and the latter highlights the development of the (neoliberal) market in the aftermath of disaster.

### *7.1 Linking theory to the results*

**Klein (2007)** intends **disaster capitalism** to explain how a disaster could open up possibilities for economic reforms such as privatisation, government deregulation and the cut of social spending while the population is still reeling from the disaster. It highlights how a neoliberal market can be extended in the wake of a 'shock' – e.g. disasters or war – for the accumulation of capital. Linking this to St. Maarten, it becomes clear that certain aspects of this concept are fitting with this case study. The development of tourism – as described in chapter two – gives an indication on how neoliberal incentives and policies were present on St. Maarten, eventually contributing to the creation of vulnerable situations to its inhabitants. This thesis highlights found certain aspects which could be linked to the broader concept of disaster capitalism (accumulation of capital through the extension of a neoliberal market). One example is that of landlords raising the rent of their houses and apartments shortly after Irma. As indicated by several interviewees, landlords raised the rent of their properties (see chapter 6.1). This was the result of an increase in demand and a decrease of supply of liveable houses and apartments on St. Maarten. According to Klein, this could be considered part of disaster capitalism, as it relates to an accumulation



of capital. The same goes for the chosen trust fund construction. The World Bank was made responsible for administering the finances, and therefore received a financial contribution for their services. Consequently, the World Bank is thus making money out of Irma, via managing the trust fund. In this sense, Irma could thus be seen as a ‘profitable opportunity’, from which the World Bank managed to make profit through a (private-public) partnership between them and both the governments of St. Maarten and The Netherlands. However, it has not become clear if any neoliberal policies and regulations were introduced in the wake of Irma, leading into the accumulation of capital. This thesis has however not found any indications that certain policies have been introduced. Therefore, more research will be needed, investigating possible policy changes (or recommendations) in the aftermath of Irma.

It could however be questionable if the examples highlighted above should be considered as being disaster capitalism or if it fits within the present elements of a continuation of the pre-disaster neoliberal market economy. When providing the example of corporate charity by Walmart, who provided 1,500 truckloads of free merchandise and food for 100,000 meals in the aftermath of Katrina in New Orleans, Schuller & Maldonado stated that “public display is commonly referred to an example of corporate charity in the form of disaster capitalism” (2016, p. 61). They however raised the question whether this would fit under the notion of disaster capitalism. One of the criticisms they posed concerning the concept is that it does not differentiate between a small business profiting from a (disaster) situation and large corporations. This was also highlighted by Wisner (2009), focussing on the limitations of the concept. Wisner highlighted this by providing the example that the concept cannot differentiate between “the grocer’s daughter” – small businesses – and the “men in suits” – large cooperation’s. As stated by Schuller & Maldonado “for the term to mean anything, it cannot simply conflate any benefit from disaster with ‘disaster capitalism’”(2016, p. 66). Therefore, it could be questioned if this collaboration or (public-private) partnership should be considered part of disaster capitalism, or if it fits within broader neoliberal activities. Even though it shows resemblance with the concept, one cannot simply argue that making profit from a disaster fits directly under the notion of disaster capitalism. Consequently, future research – further exploring disaster capitalism on St. Maarten – could examine this distinction in more detail, potentially contributing to the clarification of what disaster capitalism entails, and how it makes a distinction between smaller & bigger enterprises.

**Disaster diplomacy** fits well within the case study. **Kelman (2018)** intends to use the concept when describing how violent conflicts are affected or influenced (e.g. Aceh, Bosnia and Herzegovina). Even though a violent component is not present within this case study, elements of the concept can still be applied. Irma could be identified as a catalyst in the conflict solving process between the Netherlands and St. Maarten. In which the conflict would be the disagreement over how to tackle corruption and lack of integrity on St. Maarten. These issues of corruption and lack of integrity as still very much present within politics on St. Maarten, as recently several politicians have been accused and convicted of ‘vote buying’. This conflict is a result of the disagreement between St. Maarten and the Netherlands on several

aspects, related to tackling political corruption and lack of integrity. As a result, these issues were debited to the appearance of shortcomings within the quality of local governance. Consequently, the Netherlands – being responsible for the guarantee of good governance within the Kingdom – reacted by the instalment of several commissions, designed to investigate cases of corruption and lack of integrity. These commissions overall concluded that these issues are much present on St. Maarten and are effectively influencing local politics. Therefore, several recommendations were presented (e.g. instalment of anti-corruption body) aiming at tackling issues of corruption and lack of integrity. These were however not adapted, resulting in the continuation of these practices (and therefore pressuring the guarantee of good governance). Therefore, the Netherlands and St. Maarten were in conflict for a couple of years (since 2015) on how to tackle these issues. During these years no progress was made regarding solving the conflict. This changed however on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, when Irma hit St. Maarten.

Consequently, Irma could be identified as catalyst, influencing the diplomacy process around the conflict. As Irma devastated and disrupted the economy – affecting the financial capacity of St. Maarten – the Netherlands offered aid through an emergency fund. This created an opportunity for the Netherlands to renegotiate the implementation of an anti-corruption body. These renegotiations were not received well by the St. Maarten government: they were perceived as being a threat to sovereignty and could therefore not be accepted by the PM Marlin. This resulted in them declining financial aid from the Netherlands. This phenomenon has been described and analysed before by Nelson (2010), who highlighted that increasingly developing states are refusing some or all international aid following a natural disaster. He illustrated that states that have recently experienced a transition of regimes are more likely to refuse aid as they want to use the ‘opportunity’ to demonstrate their own ability to handle relief and recovery. If handled in a proper and sufficient manner, it could potentially increase political power. Irma however highlighted shortcomings within the political system on St. Maarten, from which the Dutch government made use in order to push its own political agenda. Thus, so far, the concept of disaster diplomacy fits the case study. Irma could be identified as being the catalyst influencing the conflict solving process between the Netherlands and St. Maarten. However, this influence has only been detected on a short-term basis. Due to time limitations, long term effects have not been researched within this thesis research. Therefore, more research is needed looking into the long-term effects of Irma on diplomacy processes. This need for research focussing on long term effects has also been highlighted by Kelman et al. who stated that; “When such catalysis occurs, disaster-related activities have so far been shown to influence diplomacy in the short-term, but not yet in the long-term” (2018, p. 1132). So even though short term effects are visible within this case study, it can be questionable if long term effects will show as well. Therefore, further research on this topic can focus on highlighting the long-term effects on the diplomatic relationship between the Netherlands and St. Maarten, and what role Irma has played in this process.

Both concepts have highlighted that the response to Irma has been a highly politicised process. Therefore, both notions are fitting within the academic domain of **disaster politics**, which describes that

disaster events and their management are part of part of unfolding political histories between social and political actors. This political process – as describe above – however had certain implications regarding the recovery of St. Maarten. One of these was that financial aid was hindered considerably as it took over six months to reach agreement. Finally, when an agreement was reached, a governance structure was designed aiming at guaranteeing that the money would be spend in a proper and sufficient manner, within being influenced by issues as corruption and lack of integrity. Therefore, a construction was made consisting of St. Maarten, the Netherlands and the World Bank. Within this structure the World Bank would manage the trust fund and provide their expertise and knowledge, and St. Maarten would submit rebuilding and recovery projects to the World Bank. All partners have also collaborated on developing a National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). In order to execute this plan and to facilitate the collaboration, a new governance system was created within the existing system. This resulted in the development of the Interim Recovery Committee (IRC), which functions as a middle man between the World Bank and St. Maarten. Both the development of the trust fund structure and the IRC are thus advocating political changes within the current governance structure. This fits within the argument of Pelling & Dill, who stated that “Recent large disasters have highlighted both the importance of political context and the possibility that disaster impact and response can influence subnational, national and international politics” (2010, p. 34). Both these changes are aiming at fostering the population by strengthening the level of resilience and by diversifying the economy, potentially reducing effects of future disasters.

This governmental concern of fostering the population is linked to the notion of governmentality as intended by Foucault (1978, 1991, 1997, 2003). This “art of government” executes a form of biopower which the state legitimatises by stating it serves to improve the health (etc.) of its population. It claims ‘to make live and to let die’, as “life and its many forms need to be studied, ordered and classified so as to be able to decide ‘whom to correct and whom to punish, as well as who shall live and who shall die, what life-forms will be promoted and which will be terminated’” (Büscher, 2018, p. 2). So, in order to fulfil this claim, ‘*apparatuses*’ or ‘*dispositifs*’ (e.g. urban planning, public health, political economy) are developed in order to reduce the risks opposing the population. This is where disaster politics could be linked, as it also aims at fostering human populations in order to sustain life. It however adds to this that politicians are doing to this in order to sustain and remain their position and power. This governmental concern over human populations – or as Foucault named it; ‘*biopolitics*’ – could be applied to the case study of St. Maarten. Within this line of reasoning, the trust fund governance structure and IRC could therefore be identified as being ‘*apparatuses*’ or ‘*dispositifs*’, both aiming at reducing future risks. Disaster politics adds to this is that these ‘*apparatuses*’ – if working effectively – contribute to politicians sustaining and remaining their power. Both are being executed by a form of biopower and governmentality, claiming ‘to make live and to let die’. Both ‘*apparatuses*’ are executing this form of biopower by setting certain financial and administrative criteria, which have to be met by community members in order to receive help and aid from the trust fund. As a result of this classification of the

population, certain community members – in particular already vulnerable groups such as immigrants and low-income workers – could not apply for certain projects, resulting in not receiving help or aid. This could thus be seen as a biopolitical response, as due to the classification of the population certain community members are not able to receive direct help from the trust fund. An example of such a community member can be found in chapter six – on the results of the disaster response. Within this chapter multiple stories were highlighted, explaining how the biopolitical response – classifying the populations into groups who can or cannot receive help – has created a situation in which they are treated as if they are disposable. This is thus resulting in a situation in which certain community members are receiving help, while others are ignored and neglected.

So, community members who did not meet these criteria are still suffering from the effects of Irma. However, community members who did meet these criteria have not yet received much help either, as shown in chapter six. These people did meet the set criteria, and should therefore receive the promised help and aid, which eventually would help them recover from Irma. This process has however been rather complicated due to implications related to the trust fund governance structure. As a result of bureaucratic procedures and regulations from the World Bank in combination with a lack of personal within the St. Maarten government, not many projects have been executed yet. Therefore, even though this form of governmentality is aiming at ‘restoring, securing, and strengthening the well-being of the people of Sint Maarten’ (Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 16), not much progress has been made on the ground. These findings show a resemblance with the argument made by **Marchezini’s (2015)** paper on the **biopolitics of disaster**, in which he argued that in São Luiz do Paraitinga, Brazil, ‘the mandate of saving biological lives’ by governmental organisations was ‘gradually converted into the devaluation of social life’ (2015, p. 370). It shows resemblance, as on St. Maarten the biopolitical response of the government to help the population recover from Irma, has at this moment in time however mainly contributed to the devaluation of life and the increase of inequalities within communities (see chapter six for examples). As a result, this response is therefore contributing to the creation of vulnerable situations on St. Maarten, making it more vulnerable to future disaster impacts.

The latter is also where this research differs from Marchezini (2015). Where Marchezini mainly examines the response of the **disaster governance** structure, this thesis additionally provides a case study on how this structure came in to place in combination with how it functions. Therefore, the historical analysis – presented in chapter two – is of relevance as it highlights the development and overall strength of a governance system. Besides – as **Tierney (2012)** highlighted – the presence of a weak governance system and certain governance conditions – such as corruption, lack of political integrity, weak environmental regulations – increases the severity of disaster impacts and the level of vulnerability. As highlighted within the results (chapter two, four, five and six) these governance conditions are very much present on St. Maarten and hindered the overall disaster governance structure and the response to Irma. An example of the latter was indicated in chapter two, when describing how the different Emergency Support Functions did not have any disaster action plans in place. These ESF

were supposed to have action plans in place in case a disaster would hit St. Maarten, but these were however not present. One of the reasons for this was that there was no control from the government on the existence of these plans, and that the disaster management section did not have a ‘stick to beat them with’ – meaning that they could not give them a fine. However even if these plans would be in place, it would still be questionable if the effects of Irma would have been reduced. Irma was of such a force – destroying and damaging the infrastructure on St. Maarten – that it would be doubtful that these plans would function in the aftermath. This fits within Clarke’s (1999) concept of ‘fantasy documents’. He explained that certain emergency documents “are little more than vague hopes for remote futures”, and that these documents “are not functional in the sense of serving as blueprint for coordination and action but are functional in the sense of asserting to others that the uncontrollable can be controlled” (Clarke, 1999, p. 16). So even though it is debateable if the (non)existence of these ‘fantasy (action plan) documents’ would have influenced the level of damage, it could still be stated that the presence of a weak governance system had a negative impact on the level of resilience on St. Maarten (see chapter 5.3.1.2).

This weak governance system – lack of regulations, lack of control, lack of enforcement, corruption, lack of integrity – did not contribute positively to the increasement of the level of resiliency of the inhabitants or the decreasing of the level of vulnerability. It created a situation in which; migration to the island was uncontrolled, spatial planning policies were lacking, the tourism industry was growing in an uncontrolled manner, and in which certain politicians – in a gatekeeper’s position – are lacking political will to improve these manners due to their own financial interests. These factors – which increased the level of vulnerability – in combination with the physical force of Irma, have led to the enormous impact of Irma on St. Maarten. It not only showed the institutional and physical vulnerability of both the inhabitants and government, but it also showed the economic vulnerability of St. Maarten, as most of the economic activities are focussing on the tourism industry. Therefore the National Recovery and Resilience Plan – which was developed in the aftermath of Irma – highlighted that the priority is the “restoring, securing, and strengthening the well-being of the people of Sint Maarten” (Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 16) and that “it will be important to explore options for diversifying the economy of St. Maarten” (Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 6). However, the (unlimited) growth of tourism – as indicated in chapter two – has pushed St. Maarten into a direction from which it can be difficult to change direction for three reasons. One as most of the infrastructure is focussing on the tourism industry (occupying most of the land), two the diversification of the economy could also potentially negatively affect already existing sectors, and thirdly the political will is lacking as certain politicians are intertwined with achieving financial benefits from the tourism industry. It is therefore in their own interest that the tourism industry will be rebuilt as before Irma.

So, with the establishment of the trust fund construction and IRC, the St. Maarten government aimed at reducing (future) risks opposing the population. This form of governmentality executed a form of biopower where it aimed at ‘restoring, securing and strengthening the well-being of the people of St.

Maarten'(Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 16). This is a form of biopower in which these '*apparatuses*' are setting certain financial and administrative criteria, which have to be met by community members in order to receive help and aid from the trust fund. However, this biopolitical response executed by these '*apparatuses*' in combination with a weak governance system did not result directly in the fostering of the population. Illustrations of such a weak governance system are; a lack of personal capacity and lack of political will regarding the implementation of recovery projects. These factors in combination with bureaucratic procedures and regulations related to the implementation of recovery projects, has resulted in a situation in which the fulfilment of making the biopolitical claim of 'making life and letting die' cannot be acted upon. Not only community members who did not meet the criteria did not receive any help, also community members who did meet these criteria did not experience much help coming from both the trust fund or IRC. Therefore, so far, this biopolitical response in combination with a weak governance structure and the lack of political will are contributing (again) to the creation of a vulnerable environment on St. Maarten (both financially as infrastructural). Financially as the rebuilding of the tourism industry on St. Maarten will again make it very vulnerable to future disasters, as indicated by Irma. And infrastructural as development practices – aiming at rebuilding the tourism industry or enabling it to grow – will (again) reproduce the same concerns regarding environmental degradation, migration, and lack of spatial planning practices. These issues will eventually contribute (once again) to the creation of vulnerable situations, from which – in case of a new disaster – already vulnerable community members (migrants) will be hit hardest.

So, the biopolitical response – establishment of the trust fund construction and interim recovery committee – in combination with the weak governance system did not result directly in the fostering of the human population. It has however (again) been a highly political process. Where it aimed at 'restoring, securing and strengthening the well-being of the people of St. Maarten'(Government of St. Maarten, 2018, p. 16), other interests of politicians in combination with their involvement within St. Maarten's tourism industry resulted in a laborious process. Therefore, so far, the recovery and rebuilding processes have not necessarily acted on the needs of the people but created a situation in which (bureaucratic procedures in combination with a lack of political will) the fulfilment of making the biopolitical claim of 'making life and letting die' cannot be acted upon. These practices will then again contribute to a situation in which development practices will continue as they did before Irma. Such development practices (aiming at financial growth) will then (again) reproduce the same concerns regarding environmental degradation, migration, and lack of spatial planning practices. Therefore, the promotion of economic growth – as promoted before Irma – will eventually contribute (once again) to the creation of vulnerable situations, from which – in case of a new disaster – already vulnerable community members (migrants) will be hit hardest. Consequently, this neoliberal thought of continuing growth will again create vulnerable situations, in which the potential impacts of future disaster will become more severe.

## ***7.2 Relevance to literature***

This case highlights how a disaster response can be political in different manners, leading to the creation of a form of governmentality. It fits within earlier research on disaster politics – Olson & Dury (1998), Olson (2000), and Pelling & Dill (2010) – and by adding a Foucauldian lens it explores how the population is being taken care of via biopolitical forms of power. This eventually led to an analysis of how the chosen (disaster) governance structure is and was functioning during Irma, and what the implications of this structure is. Both have been researched in multiple sources, such as the Algemene Rekenkamer (2018), Newspapers (e.g. Volkskrant, Trouw, NRC, PZC), documentaries (e.g. Pauw op Sint Maarten (2019)) and others. These sources were however, focussing on either the functioning of the governance structure or on the implications of it but not necessarily highlighting both aspects. For example, the report published by the Algemene Rekenkamer focuses on the progress of the rebuilding and recovery of St. Maarten, concluding that not many projects have been implemented yet. Complementary to these reports, this thesis therefore explored both the political history and functioning of the governance structure(s) involved and explored its implications. It therefore contributed to the further understanding on how St. Maarten developed over time, and how this has influenced disaster governance.

## ***7.3 Limitations***

Within this section the limitations of this research will be highlighted and discussed. One of these limitations of is related to the fieldwork period and the timeframe in which it took place. In total the fieldwork period lasted for about ten weeks – from October till December 2018 – in which several interviews were conducted. Even though ten weeks seems like a reasonable amount, it became clear that this is quite a short time period in which a lot of work has to be done. Therefore, if this period would have extended for a certain amount of time, then it would have been possible to interview even more informants. This would then result in an even more complete set of data.

Another limitation is related to gaining access to the field. It became clear in the beginning of the fieldwork period that gaining access to the field would be a more time-consuming activity than expected. As the first two weeks were used to familiarize myself with the field and to gain access, only eight weeks remained in which respondents needed to be contacted and interviewed. Therefore, the timeframe in which this fieldwork period took place can be seen as a limitation.

Another factor limiting this research was a lack of scientific literature on St. Maarten. Over the years not much scientific literature has been published focussing merely on St. Maarten. The few researchers that studied St. Maarten mostly focussed on its natural environment, investing its flora and fauna. Scientific literature focussing on topics such as (disaster) governance, disaster management, or disaster studies in general did not focus on St. Maarten before.

## 8. Conclusion

This research has sought to understand and subsequently attempted to shed light on how disaster governance, in combination with St. Maarten's development, had an effect on the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma. Four sub-research questions were devised to focus the data collection by understanding; (1) what different factors have shaped development on St. Maarten and how have these influenced the vulnerability level; (2) what characterises disaster governance in St. Maarten; (3) why the disaster response in the wake of Hurricane Irma has been disjointed; (4) how do different groups on the island understand efforts to relieve vulnerability or increase resilience.

By making use of a historical analysis, background information was set together exploring the quality of local governance of St. Maarten and showing its shortcomings and where the origins of these problems are located. It highlighted the role of gatekeepers in St. Maarten's development, and how they facilitated the shift from the production of colonial products to the tourism industry. These gatekeepers managed to profit from multiple changes regarding the status of St. Maarten, as highlighted by Roitman & Veenendaal (2016). Simultaneously, to the development of tourism, several issues arose related to environmental degradation, migration, political corruption, lack of political integrity and spatial planning. The combination of tourism growth together with the lack of infrastructural investments and the enforcement of laws resulted in a growing level of vulnerability for St. Maarten and its inhabitants.

The severity of this level of vulnerability became clear during and after hurricane Luis in 1995, which devastated St. Maarten. The response of both the Dutch and the St. Maarten government could be explained by making use of the concepts of disaster politics and disaster diplomacy, as Luis catalysed certain changes within the institutional arrangements within the Kingdom. One of these being a disaster governance system, which came in place as a reaction to Luis. This disaster management structure provides an organisational plan on how St. Maarten should prepare for and respond to a possible disaster. This organisational plan did however not function in a sufficient manner, due the presence of a weak governance system. The functioning of this system became however exposed before, during and after Irma hit St. Maarten. A lack of regulations regarding spatial planning and immigration, the lack of enforcement of existing laws and the malfunctioning of public administration in the wake of Irma, in combination with the enormous physical force and unpredictability of Irma, has resulted in a disjointed and unstructured response.

Simultaneously to the development of the disaster management structure, after Luis, multiple research commissions looked into issues of political corruption and lack of integrity, related to this weak governance system. Recommendations were however not adapted by the St. Maarten government, but these did play an important role within the response to Hurricane Irma. As with Luis, the response to Irma could be identified as being political, as it catalysed the development of a form of governmentality advocating a form of biopower of the population. As a reaction to Irma and to structure the response certain '*apparatus*' or '*dispositifs*' – trust fund governance system and the interim recovery committee



– were established, aiming at ‘restoring, securing and strengthening the well-being of the people of St. Maarten’. However, the establishment of both governance structures could be identified as events being or advocating political changes within the current governance structure on St. Maarten. The Dutch government used Irma as an opportunity to implement certain earlier recommendations regarding corruption and lack on integrity on St. Maarten. They therefore posed two conditions towards St. Maarten to which they had to agree in order to receive access to the trust fund. At first St. Maarten’s government refused as did not want to agree with these terms. This changed however on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2017, as PM Marlin’s cabinet lost its majority within the parliament, resulting in a motion of no confidence towards Marlin. New elections were requested, and the interim cabinet immediately accepted these proposed terms. It took however till the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 until the actual grant agreement was signed between the Netherlands, St. Maarten and the World Bank – who were assigned to administer the trust fund. This trust fund governance system was created in order to rule out the possibility that any funds would ‘disappear’ due to corruption. Simultaneously an interim recovery committee (IRC) was established. This committee was established in order to coordinate the collaboration between St. Maarten and the World Bank.

Although both trust fund governance system and IRC aimed at ‘restoring, securing and strengthening the well-being of the people of St. Maarten’, they have not acted in the interest of the people yet. Even though both these ‘*apparatuses*’ are established in order to foster the human population of St. Maarten by reducing potential (new) risks opposing them, results are still not much present. Instead a situation has been created in which bureaucratic procedures, in combination with the lack of political will, are very present and are therefore hindering the implementation of recovery projects. Therefore, the fulfilment of making the biopolitical claim of ‘making life and letting die’ cannot be acted on completely, and therefore are contributing to a situation in which development practices – as before Irma – will continue. What makes this biopolitical is the result of the classification of the population. This classification of the population is done through setting criteria for is allowed to receive help (directly) coming from the trust fund. As a result, certain community members – in particular already vulnerable members, such as immigrants – were not allowed to apply for such help and are therefore not receiving help or aid coming from the trust fund. However, community members that did qualify for support did however not experience receiving help either, due to a weak governance structure and lack of political will. A weak governance system as regulations are not enforced and as there is a lack of personal capacity. And a lack of political will, as due to politicians who are not willing to facilitate changes (e.g. promotion of economic diversification) which could potentially decrease the level of vulnerability. These changes would not be in their benefit, as they would – due to their gatekeepers’ position – would profit again if the tourism sector would bloom again. Therefore, these factors described above in combination with the biopolitical response executed by the St. Maarten government, will (again) contributed to the creation of vulnerable situations on St. Maarten (both financially and infrastructural). Financially as reconstructing the tourism industry will again make St. Maarten very

vulnerable to future disasters. And infrastructural as rebuilding the tourism industry and the connected infrastructure will again contribute and reproduce the same issues concerning environmental degradation, migration, and lack of spatial planning practices. All of these issues will again contribute to the creation of vulnerable situations on St. Maarten, from which already vulnerable community members will be hit hardest. So, in sum, the biopolitical response of St. Maarten's government regarding the IRC and trust fund construction in combination with a weak governance system and lack of political will, have created a state of affairs which resulted in the creation of a vulnerable St. Maarten (both financially and infrastructural) and vulnerable community members.

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## Annex

### *Annex 1. Articles and online posts on research*

**Nature Foundation St Maarten**  
29 oktober 2018 · 🌐

Cole Bay – The Sint Maarten Nature Foundation has started a new research project under the lead of Master student Joey de Hamer, who is studying Development and Rural Innovation at the Wageningen University located in the Netherlands, concentrated on disaster studies and in particular disaster governance. His research is focused on disaster governance on St. Maarten in the wake of hurricane Irma, which devastated the island in September 2017. [ 172 more words ]  
<https://naturefoundationsxm.org/.../nature-foundation-facili.../>



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**Nature Foundation Facilitating Research on Post Irma Response and Recovery Processes|Nature Foundation St...**

# NATURE FOUNDATION ST MAARTEN

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## Nature Foundation Facilitating Research on Post Irma Response and Recovery Processes

Posted on 29 Oct 2018



Cole Bay – The Sint Maarten Nature Foundation has started a new research project under the lead of Master student Joey de Hamer, who is studying Development and Rural Innovation at the Wageningen University located in the Netherlands, concentrated on disaster studies and in particular disaster governance. His research is focused on disaster governance on St. Maarten in the wake of hurricane Irma, which devastated the island in September 2017.

De Hamer is researching how the island has responded to Irma and what this response has resulted in. Knowledge will be gathered about how St. Maarten has proceeded in the recovery process in the aftermath of Irma and to what extent this has led to the development of several situations affecting life on the island.

Both the response and recovery process will be researched and analyzed by planning several interviews with involved stakeholders. Therefore the Nature Foundation is encouraging involved stakeholders and interested persons to share their experiences and ideas on both the response and recovery processes in the aftermath of Irma.

If you would like to participate and talk to de Hamer about your experiences and opinions or if you know someone who would like to contribute, you can contact him via his e-mail – [joey.dehamer@wur.nl](mailto:joey.dehamer@wur.nl) – or via his phone number – (721) 581-5121 (no WhatsApp). All the gained research data will be treated confidential, names and locations will not be mentioned in the report and will not be retraceable.



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**SEARCH FOR CRASHED PLANE P. 30**

**Merkel  
Plans  
Exit In  
2021  
Page 25**



**My Island  
My Heineken**

VOL 28 NO. 140

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

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## Maho Group, CMEC Dutch Caribbean sign agreement to improve solar farm

**MAHO**—The Maho Group, owners and operators of Sonesta St. Maarten Resorts, signed an agreement on October 16 with China Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC) Dutch Caribbean, a subsidiary of the large Chinese-owned company that specialises in energy and renewable energy projects around the

world, to rebuild their eco-friendly solar power farm.

CMEC, which offers services that include design, supply, construction, installing, financing and more, will supply and implement the most advanced photovoltaic panels available in the market. The new panels will increase the

*Continued on page 8*

## Galisbay commercial port sees increase in freight movement

**MARIGOT**—The commercial port in Galisbay has processed some 300,000 tons of goods over the past twelve months, according to the Chamber of Commerce's newsletter.

"Activity is up from 20 to 30 per cent," Port Director Albéric Ellis was quoted as saying. "It's the effect of the reconstruction, and this growth will continue over the next few years."

Two projects are being studied and carried out by the port establishment: expansion of the storage area and extension of the docks (300 additional metres) of the port to absorb the increase in activity. The second project consists of the creation of a cruise

pier, approximately 400 metres long, to accommodate cruise ships of medium capacity (60 to 1,200 passengers), but of a high-end clientele.

At Grand Case Airport there has been a 16 per cent decrease in passenger traffic in 2018, or 25,362 passengers less than 2017 over the same period. But there was a 13.5 per cent increase in chartered cargo, or 33,555kgs of additional goods.

Installing beacons on the runway began in May 2018 and should be completed by the end of the year. Currently the airspace is closed 15 minutes after sunset.

Work is expected to start on the perimeter fences at the end of 2018. Security equipment has been entrusted to the company Smith Detection which won the bid. Equipment is being installed

*Continued on page 9*

### IN BRIEF

#### • Pond Island FOUR-HOUR SHUTDOWN

TelEm Group of Companies will be carrying out an emergency shutdown of its telecommunication services to-night. Page 3

#### • Cole Bay STUDY ON RESPONSE

Nature Foundation started a research project on disaster management in the wake of Hurricane Irma. Page 4

#### • Belair SMITH SAYS ATTEND FAIR

Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Wycliffe Smith made a call to attend today's Career and Study Fair. Page 7



A woman N.S. being transported by emergency personnel on Monday evening for further treatment. The suspect in the shooting turned himself in to police shortly after the incident took place.

## Woman shot in DQ, In critical condition

**DUTCH QUARTER**—A woman's brother-in-law C.C.M. was arrested for shooting his sister-in-law N.S., who lives at Milton Drive 10 in Dutch Quarter, at 9:45pm Monday.

Police patrols found the woman on the ground suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. Paramedics were alerted and transported her in critical condition to St. Maarten Medical Center (SMMC) for further treatment.

The scene of the crime was immediately cordoned off by police for the Forensic Department officers to collect evidence and detectives to speak to potential witnesses.

The suspect in this case turned himself in to the police in Philips-

burg after 10:00pm and was arrested on the spot. He also turned over to police the weapon used in the shooting, which was immediately confiscated, according to

the police on Monday evening.

The reason for the shooting at this time is still unclear, according to police.

## Wescot-Williams questions govt. support and plans for vendors

**PHILIPSBURG**—Government's plans for land along the still-to-be-constructed ring road and whether any plot will be allocated to market vendors were among questions Member of Parliament Sarah Wescot-Williams has posed Spatial Planning Minister Miklos Giteron and Economic Affairs Minister Stuart Johnson in a letter.

"The Market vendors and all the other small and micro entrepreneurs should be part and parcel of our economic recovery," she said in a press statement outlining her query to the ministers. She is concerned that no information is available about market vendors in Philipsburg and food trucks on Walter Nisbeth Road.

*Continued on page 7*

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## ENNIA is meeting payment obligations

WILLEMSTAD/PHILIPSBURG—Since the emergency regulation on companies within the ENNIA group, the Central Bank of Curaçao and St. Maarten (CBCS) has been working on restructuring the insurance company, which continues to carry out its activities normally whereby pension and damage benefits are simply paid out.

CBCS said in a release that the restructuring is also carried out in the interest of ENNIA policyholders.

"As a result of the articles published in newspapers suggesting that ENNIA doesn't have to meet its payment obligations, the CBCS wishes to clarify the following: It is true that if

an emergency regulation applies, as in the case of ENNIA, payments can be suspended. The purpose of the emergency regulation at ENNIA is to restore solvency. Part of this is the normal continuation of business operations.

"It has been decided that individual policyholders will not be duped. People who count on payments from ENNIA for their income are paid and payment obligations towards private individuals who are insured for medical expenses, damage (for example, home or car), invalidity and death and liability, will be fulfilled in accordance with the policy conditions.

"There are other activi-

ties that can be suspended in case they hamper the restructuring. An example is the transfer (upon request) of accrued value under a collective pension contract to another pension provider. While suspending such a transfer, ENNIA will continue to pay out to the pension beneficiaries under the collective pension contract and the returns will be credited to the accrued value in accordance with the agreements made.

"Even if no emergency regulation is applicable, transfer of accrued value may be refused (article 45 paragraph 1 of the National Ordinance on the Supervision of Insurance Industry)," adds CBCS.



Clean-up after Hurricane Irma. (File photo)

## Research started on post-Irma response and recovery actions

COLE BAY—Nature Foundation has started a new research project focused on disaster governance in St. Maarten in Hurricane Irma's wake some fourteen months ago. The research is led by Wageningen University Master's degree student Joey de Hamer.

De Hamer is studying Development and Rural Innovation with a concentration on disaster studies, in particular disaster governance. He is researching how the island responded to Irma and the results. Information will also be gathered on the extent to which the response has led to the development of situations affecting island life.

Both the response and recovery process will be researched and analysed by planning several interviews with involved stakeholders.

Nature Foundation encourages stakeholders and inter-

ested persons to share their experiences and ideas on both the response and recovery processes. All research data will be treated confidentially; names and locations will not be mentioned in the report and will not be traceable.

To participate or recommend someone who can share information vital to the research, e-mail De Hamer at joey.dehamer@wur.nl or call +1-721-581-5121 (no WhatsApp).



Air Canada will resume flights to St. Maarten for the 2018-19 winter season as of December 15. The flight will connect Toronto and St. Maarten using a Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft (replacing Air Canada Rouge 767). The company will fly twice a week to the island; this is an added date compared to its once-a-week flights in the 2016-17 season.

## Fruit boats back to their old spot

WILLEMSTAD—The Venezuelan fruit boats coming to Curaçao have moved back to Sha Caprileskade after a long wait, the spot where a "floating market" had been established for more than a hundred years.

The vendors were forced to stop coming early this year because of a trade and travel embargo against the so-called ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) imposed by the crisis-hit neighbouring South American country's President Nicolás Maduro. He accused the Dutch Caribbean authorities of doing too little against the

smuggling of goods from the mainland.

The local government then decided to renovate the quay, which has been strengthened. The vending stands were also given a completely new look, with colourful awnings and tiled counters. This not only looks better but ensures better hygiene.

The boats were able to return again after an agreement between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Venezuela in August. They were temporarily relocated to Kleine Werf, but are now back at their old spot.

### VACANCY

A. Lloyd is in need of a  
**CARETAKER FOR  
PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD**

#### Job summary:

- Assistance cleaning/washing
- Able to cook according to the guidelines set
- Keeping the household interior/exterior tidy
- Tending to the pets and plants
- Assisting the person with mobility
- Occasional errands to do outside the house
- Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

#### Qualifications:

- Trustworthy
- Dedicated and patient
- Clean and punctual
- Fluent in English

Compensation: NAF. 1,530 per month.

Interested persons can call 553-6408 and submit their application plus resume to email: babygirl\_7020@hotmail.com and at the Department of Labour Affairs.

### AANKONDIGING

Bij exploit d.d. 26 oktober 2018, afschrift waarvan is gelaten aan de Off. van Justitie op St. Maarten, heb ik, Solange M. APON, deurwaarder op St. Maarten, alhier ten verzoeken van Jean Louis Doussous, gedomicilieerd ten kantore van mr. Brenda Brooks op St. Maarten, aan Vivian Thomas & Patricia Elaine Thomas-Morrison, thans zonder bekende woon- of verblijfplaats op St. Maarten. **BETEKEND** een door de ondergetekende deurwaarder opgemaakt proces-verbaal van 25e oktober 2018, houdende executoriaal onroerendgoed beslag als in voormeld proces-verbaal omschreven.

De deurwaarder S.M. APON

### VACANCY

**FRIENDLY DUTY FREE 1**  
Front Street 16A, Philipsburg, St. Maarten  
is looking for:

- Cashiers
- Sales Clerks
- Warehouse Helpers

**Job summary:** Cashing, reconciling cash pan on a daily basis.

**Qualifications:** No formal qualifications are required as training is available.

**Compensation:** To be determined.

All interested persons can submit their application and resume to the company's email: friendlydutyfree@gmail.com or call: +1 721 523 2445.

Also send a copy of your resume to the Labour Department.

## ***Annex 2. Description of ESF Groups St. Maarten***

### **ESF 1 GEBE Water and Energy Services**

Representatives from GEBE that is a part of the disaster management group and they are responsible for water and energy;

### **ESF 2 Bureau Telecommunication and Post (TeleM)**

Representatives from Bureau Telecommunication & Post Sint Maarten;

### **ESF 3 Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure (VROMI)**

Representatives from VROMI and they are responsible for public works, transportation and logistics. Among other things this group deals with temporary garbage and debris collection locations and pick-up dates. Also waste and sewage management fall in this group;

### **ESF 4 Fire Department**

Representatives from the Fire Department and they are responsible for hazards and response activities;

### **ESF 5 Police Department**

Representatives from the Police Department and they are responsible for public order, safety and traffic regulation. Questions about the curfew and how to obtain a hurricane pass will be answered by ESF 5;

### **ESF 6 Department of Public Health (Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour)**

Representatives from the Department of Public Health (VSA) and they are responsible for preventive and collective health;

### **ESF 7 Department of Social Services (Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labour)**

Representatives from Social Services (VSA) and they are responsible for evacuation, shelter, relief and mass care including humanitarian affairs, care for the elderly, food and ration distribution for general public, domestic violence and other issues;

### **ESF 8 Department of communication (DCOMM)**

Representatives from the Department of Communication (DCOMM) and they are responsible for dissemination of public information and media;

### **ESF 9 Ministry of General Affairs**

Representatives from the Ministry of General Affairs and they are responsible for governmental affairs;

### **ESF 10 Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunication (TEATT)**

Representatives from TEATT and they are responsible for the Harbour, Airport and Hotel activities.



### ***Annex 3. Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund projects as of May 2019***

#### **Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Trust Fund projects as of May 2019**

| <b>Project</b>  | <b>Project description</b>  | <b>Project components</b>   | <b>Grant Agreement</b> |
|---|---|---|------------------------|
| <i>Emergency Recovery Project</i> (US\$55.2 million) – Planned over the period of 2018-2023, starting in 2019         | The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to contribute to Sint Maarten's immediate emergency recovery needs and strengthen institutional capacity to manage resilient recovery and reconstruction.  | Emergency measures for the recovery of disaster first responders and preparedness facilities (14.75M Dollar)    | Approved on 10-07-2018 |
|   |   | Restore Utilities Services after Hurricane Irma (11.60M Dollar)   |                        |
|   |   | Housing Repair and Public Buildings Repair and Reconstruction (19.85M Dollar)                                   |                        |
|   |   | Institutional Support for Reconstruction (9M Dollar)  |                        |
| <i>Income Support and Training Support</i> (US\$22.5 million) Planned over the period of 2018-2020, starting in 2018  | The objective of the Project is to provide temporary income support, improve the employability of affected beneficiaries in targeted sectors, and strengthen the social protection system's capacity for shock-response and protection of the poor. | Supporting the Implementation of an Emergency Income Support and Training Program ("EISTP") (US\$20.56 million) | Approved on 02-08-2018 |
|   |   | Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Enhance the Social Protection System (US\$1.12 million)                 |                        |
|   |   | Project Management (US\$ 0.82 million)  |                        |
| <i>Hospital Resiliency and Preparedness</i> (US\$25 million) – Planned over the period of 2018-2024, starting in 2018 | Improve the preparedness and capacity of hospital services in Sint Maarten  | Building and launching of the new hospital (US\$17 million; US\$75 million counterpart funds)                   | Approved on 16-08-2018 |
|   |   | Transition and Contingency Plan for Sint Maarten Medical Centre (US\$7.7 million)                               |                        |

|  |   |   |                        |
|--|---|---|------------------------|
|  |   | Project Management (US\$0.3 million; US\$0.5 million counterpart funds) |                        |
| <i>Emergency Debris Management Project</i> (US\$25 million) – Planned over the period of 2019-2023, starting in 2019 | To manage debris from the hurricane and reconstruction activities to facilitate recovery and reduce risks   | Debris Clearance and Management (US\$22 million)                        | Approved on 21-12-2018 |
|  |   | Technical Assistance (US\$2.5 million)                                  |                        |
|  |   | Project Management and Implementation Support (US\$0.5 million)         |                        |
| <i>Enterprise Recovery Project</i> (US\$35 million) – Planned over the period of 2019-2023, starting in 2019         | The development objective is to support the recovery of micro, small, and medium sized enterprises through direct financial assistance to contribute to the restoration of economic activity. | Direct financial support to MSMEs for investment and working capital    | To be announced        |
|  |   | Study of financial solutions for improved disaster resilience           |                        |
|  |   | Training, project implementation, audit and monitoring and evaluation   |                        |
| <i>Airport Terminal Reconstruction Project</i> (US\$50 million)  | To be announced   | To be announced   | To be announced        |
| <i>Solid Waste Management and Environmental Improvement</i> (US\$35 million)   | To be announced   | To be announced   | To be announced        |

**Source:** (World Bank, 2018d, 2018c, 2018b, 2018e, 2018a)

*Annex 4. Images damage on St. Maarten*









