Hurricanes on Saint Martin

The constitutional impact of hurricanes in the Lesser Antilles in a comparative perspective

History Master Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. G. Oostindie
Student: Jan C. Geraets
Student number: 0236179
Address: Prins Hendrikstraat 12 D
3071 LH Rotterdam
Tel: 0641718513
E-mail: jangeraets@gmail.com

Department of History, Leiden University, June 26, 2012

Contents

Introduction

Although natural disasters are indifferent to political borders, people and their institutions are not. Natural disasters can wreak havoc to any society. However, small islands are especially vulnerable, since one natural disaster, like a hurricane or a volcanic eruption, can affect, or even lay waste to an entire island. How can a small island cope with these kinds of disasters if one such catastrophe can seriously hamper or even destroy the entire ability of an island to engage in disaster recovery? Across the world there are many small island states, or entities. They have very differing constitutional forms. Some island states are independent, like Grenada or Barbados in the Caribbean, or Nauru in the Pacific. Other small island states are affiliated in many different ways with other (island) states. Some of these are still affiliated with their former colonizers, like the Dutch, French, American or British dependencies across the globe. These small island entities and their metropoles have varying constitutional ties. Thus these islands tend to be governed differently. And difference in governance can lead to different approaches to disaster-management.

The Caribbean is one of the most diverse areas in the world when it comes to constitutional make-up. For this paper, the focus will be on the islands of the Lesser Antilles, which is the string of islands that form the eastern boundary of the Caribbean sea and the islands of the southern Caribbean, north of South America. Some of these islands still have constitutional ties with their former colonizers, while others have become independent states. Needless to say, different entities cope differently with the advent, occurrence and aftermath of politically indiscriminate natural disasters. But how and to what extent do the constitutional ties influence the islands' capability to cope with natural disasters; and in what way does the aftermath of these disasters affect the islands' constitutional ties? These questions will be central in this thesis.

The above mentioned islands are in the literature often revered to as Sub National Island Jurisdictions, or SNIJs[1]. This name is used because even though these small island states have different political affiliations with different countries, they share the traits of being small, both in size and in population, and being an island. The political affiliations range from completely integrated islands, such as the French dependencies, to loose associations, such as the British territories of Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. Obviously, there are also independent small island states. The country of St. Kitts and Nevis can be seen as a representative of these type of small islands. However, the country is not a SNIJs, since it is an independent country and therefore not sub-national.

The SNIJs are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, mainly due to their size and location. One powerful hurricane can wreak havoc to entire islands, affecting all of its inhabitants, buildings and infrastructure. These disasters can range from hurricanes, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes to floods. In terms of human resources, small entities often lack the manpower, in quantity and/or quality, to provide a range of services which are vital in the event of natural disasters. These include emergency personnel, such as an adequate police force, fire-fighters and medical professionals.

In addition, being a small island state causes a range of other potential weaknesses. These entities can be extremely vulnerable to economic change, since they often do not poses a diverse economy with many different branches (i.e. diversification). Instead, they rely largely - especially in the Lesser Antilles - on tourists for the brunt of their income. The tourist-sector is in general the first 'victim' of economic decline (also of natural disasters). In the political spectrum, it is often hard for these entities to supply manpower or even funds, to be truly active in the diplomatic arena. Due to their size, they are often incapable of defending themselves militarily, as was the case with the invasion of Grenada by the USA in 1983. Moreover, small island-states often lack strategic goods and need to

1 G. Baldacchino and D. Milne, *The Case for Non-Sovereignty, lessons from sub-national island jurisdictions* (London 2009), 4.

import these, potentially causing them to be dependent on a supplier.

Taking all these disadvantages into account, it can be very beneficial for a small island entity to be affiliated to a larger, and more wealthy metropolis (which usually are former colonizers). A metropole can potentially lend assistance in case of all of the aforementioned weaknesses. The main topic for this paper will therefore be how the constitutional status has affected the ability of SNIJs to cope with natural-disasters. The aim is to compare SNIJs and independent islands in the Lesser Antilles, and determine how different constitutional relationships have affected disaster-management since the era of decolonization and, subsequently, if disasters have affected constitutional relationships. I choose the Lesser Antilles as my topic first of all because it covers wide variety of differing political entities. A second reason is the high frequency and severity of natural disasters in the area. Finally, the fact that the islands are of comparable size makes the research more feasible (small enough that an entire island will be affected by natural disasters).

Before discussing the research question into more detail, the theoretical framework requires more attention. As Fritz remarked half a century ago, communities and societies that have repeatedly and recently experienced the same kind of disaster become best prepared and organized to deal with it.[2] The repeated impact of a same disaster may even lead to the emergence of a *disaster management culture* within a society. This *culture* can subsequently be sub-divided into three generic aspects: first, the societal aspect, which is the ability of people to cope with disasters, this mainly includes the awareness and preparedness of the population in respect to disasters. Second, the institutional aspect, which refers to the ability of local institutions to cope with disasters. In other words, are there disaster plans, is the population adequately informed, are there, for example, any disaster-response teams available? And concerning the aftermath, are the institutions or local politicians able to generate enough funds to do adequate recovery activities, and maybe even able to improve construction. Which leads to the last aspect, the technological aspect. The latter includes physical disaster preparedness, like adequate housing and sea-walls.

The 'constitutional make-up' determines to a great extent the institutional aspect of a society's disaster culture. SNIJs that are affiliated to a metropole, tend to receive substantial aid to improve institutions which engage in disaster-management. Therefore, it makes sense in the present paper to focus on the institutional aspects of disaster management cultures. In addition to this, the institutions can also have a big or even determining influence on the cultural and technological aspects, because the adequate conduct of the institutions can lead to adequate disaster preparedness on the cultural (individual disaster awareness/preparedness) and as well on the technological (is construction adequately disaster-proof?) level. Conversely, these two aspects, cultural and technological, when researched properly, can show the state of the institutions.

My approach will be to determine how governmental institutions have handled the advent, occurrence and aftermath of natural disasters. This can be done by researching how disaster management was shaped on the three above mentioned levels. Primary sources like newspapers or dedicated disaster research (of individual disasters) by disaster experts will form the basis of this research. By investigating different natural disasters, one can determine whether disaster management has changed during the course of the post Second World War era. And how successful disaster-management has been concerning each entity, and, conversely, whether disasters have changed or influenced the constitutional ties between the entities and their respective metropoles.

First it is necessary to establish what a disaster actually *is*. Is there a difference between natural disasters and human, or man-made disasters? And why is a historical approach towards disasters required? Subsequently, it is important to point out that there are many different kinds of disasters. Which disaster-types have struck the Lesser Antilles? After establishing which disasters have struck the

2 Charles, E. Fritz, 'Disaster' in: Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet, *Contemporary Social Problems, An Introduction to the Sociology of Deviant Behavior and Social Disorganization* (New York 1961) 659.

region it is time to choose the islands which will be the subject of the following case-studies, which will comprise the following four chapters. These decisions will be justified according to the idea that each political constellation (the three metropoles and a sovereign) should be represented and that these entities should share one specific disaster-type. That is to say, a disaster-type which struck all the selected islands and with more or less comparable severity. This is important to do actual comparative research on disasters.

At present there are still three European metropoles which have a relationship with a number of dependencies in the Lesser Antilles. These are France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. There are also a number of independent island-states in the area. I will leave the US' dependencies Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands out of the equation in an effort to narrow the scope.

I will divide this paper in two parts. In the first part I will focus on hurricanes that have struck Saint Martin since World War II. This island has the remarkable feature that it is divided in two parts: the southern part is affiliated to the Netherlands and the northern part is an integral part of France. Each hurricane will be researched in three parts. First, the predisaster period will be investigated. In this section I will try to discover to what extent the island was prepared for disasters. Were there, for example, disaster plans, and was the population aware of the potential devastation that can be inflicted by a natural disaster? In short, was there any disaster preparation going on before the occurrence of a natural disaster? Second, I will examine the immediate recovery procedure. Who was active during the disaster relief period? Were the local populations and authorities able to recover by themselves? Was help provided by the metropolis or other countries? Did NGOs play a large part in the recovery? Finally, in the same vein, I will research the recovery process. Again it is asked, who were crucial players concerning long term recovery? The inhabitants themselves? Or did the islands depend mainly on aid from overseas? To initiate the comparative approach, I will first compare the Dutch response to hurricane Luis, with the response of the same hurricane on the French part; Saint Martin.

In the second part of this paper I will put the Dutch experiences in a broader perspective. I will research how Montserrat, which is a dependency of the UK, and Saint Kitts-Nevis, which is an independent country, have responded to hurricanes. In particular I will examine how these two entities have coped with hurricane Hugo. I will use the same approach to research Hugo as will done with regard to the hurricanes that affected Saint Martin. Thus I will have four case studies. In the conclusion, these cases can be compared and the main questions can be answered. The answers will hopefully allow an evaluation as to which constitutional form is the most adequate in relation to disaster-management and whether disasters have caused metropoles to change their relationship with their dependencies.

1 Defining disasters

In this chapter I will first examine what a natural disaster actually *is*, and what the difference is between *hazards* and *disasters*. Furthermore, the difference between *natural* and *man-made* disasters is discussed. Next, it is important to point out why a historical approach towards disaster research is required. Thereafter I will investigate which types of disaster have been common in the Lesser Antilles since WW II. To achieve this I will present an inventory of the disasters which have hit the Lesser Antilles since 1945. After the creation of this inventory, it is time to decide and justify which islands will be the subject of the case-studies. This will be done by the methodology which is explained in the introduction.

1.1 What is a disaster?

In general we can state that there is a difference between a *hazard* and a *disaster* and, subsequently, disasters are subdivided into *natural* disasters and *human* or *man-made* disasters. First, we must define the difference between hazards and disasters, and in doing so we can also define these terms individually. Although the terms are often used synonymously, according to Ms. Garcia-Acosta, *hazard* refers to the agent and *disaster* to the process in which the agent and specific physical, social, and economic factors participate: what really constitutes a disaster, then, is the combination of a destructive agent from the natural and/or man-made environment and a group of human beings living in a specific local socio-cultural context.[3] Thus, disasters can be viewed as the result of an encounter between hazards and people who are vulnerable, not just physically, but also economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally.[4]

Second, what is the difference between *natural* and *human* disasters? The former is caused by nature itself and is often regarded as an uncontrollable phenomenon to which only a certain level of preparedness is to be reached. The latter is perceived as being caused by humans themselves and therefore, at least in personal experience, avoidable and a type of disaster to which one can more or less adequately prepare for. Natural disasters can include hurricanes, earthquakes, landslides, floods, droughts and volcanic eruptions. Man-made disasters can range from famine to war and include industrial or technological disasters.

However tempting, the division between natural and man-made disasters seems inappropriate. This is due to the fact that the effects of natural disasters can be worsened by man. For example, when the 1985 earthquake hit Mexico-city, its epicenter was over 200 miles from the capital. However, cheap construction and the digging of huge wells for the ever growing water demand, increased the severity of the catastrophe. Likewise, deforestation can cause harmful landslides when the soil is exposed to heavy rain. Lastly, the rising sea-levels may seem a natural phenomenon, but is often attributed to increasing CO2 levels which, at least in part, is probably caused by man.

Another reason why this division seems false, is because in essence there can be made no distinction between human and non-human nature. Some researchers suggest that even ‘natural’ disasters are most often man-made in the sense that their catastrophic effects on human populations depend on social and economic problems of vulnerability and the unequal distribution of risk.[5] Like mentioned before, a disaster may unveil the degree of inequality that already exists within a society.

3 Virginia Garcia-Acosta 'Historical Disaster Research' in: Susanne M. Hoffman and Anthony Oliver-Smith, *Catastrophe and Culture, The Anthropology of Disaster* (Santa Fe 2002) 57.

4 Ibidem, 56.

5 Mark D. Anderson, *Disaster Writing, The Cultural Politics of Catastrophe in Latin America* (Virginia 2011) 28.

From a more theoretical point of view, disaster is defined as the negative to normalcy and normalcy is socially defined, not natural.[6] In this sense, both disaster and nature are socially constructed human concepts. To avoid ambiguity, historians should use the more precise alternative term: *nature-induced disaster*, which reflects the fact that catastrophes are brought about by natural phenomena without obscuring their anthropogenic dimensions.[7] Which is the term that will be used in this paper.

1.2 Historical approach

It is important to point out why a historical approach towards nature-induced disasters is necessary. Historians have long neglected or misinterpreted the occurrence of nature-induced disasters. However understandable, the view that a disaster is like a bee, "it stings once and than it dies" seems false. Nature-induced disasters are often not incidental and the advent or incidence of such catastrophes has at least had as much effect on certain societies as wars or political turmoil. For example, many communities have been shaped by the threat of floods, which encouraged these communities to work together to make sure that they would keep dry feet. Indeed, even nature-induced disasters which have been incidental, like earthquakes or famine, have exercised an influence on the course of human history and culture that can hardly be overestimated.[8]

One example, which is also mentioned above, of a nature-induced disaster which changed the course of an entire country is the massive earthquake that left a part of Mexico City in ruins, including a large number of government buildings. This catastrophe led to the collapse of Mexico's "perfect dictatorship". The disaster created solidarity among Mexican citizens, strengthened civil society and the political self-consciousness of a repressed population, and with one stroke made manifest the impotence of a regime that was unequipped to conduct critical rescue and recovery operations.[9] The catastrophe unveiled the true state of the regime, like many other disasters of similar magnitude have shown in other countries, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in the United Stated, the 2008 Sichuan earthquake in China, the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti and Chile and the 2011 triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown occurring in Japan. The problems these nations faced were similar: a lack of emergency preparedness, social inequalities and construction practices that increased vulnerability, tardiness in initiating the rescue effort, challenges in providing adequate support for survivors, accusations of corruption in the handling of emergency funds and donations, and frustrations with leadership.[10]

In contrast to the purely destructive traits of nature-induce disasters, they can also be 'used' by people in power to legitimize or initiate certain ideas or reforms. Just like many wars were started to distract tensions at home, nature-induced disasters can be used as lightning rods for internal turmoil. Wars and disasters can have unifying traits which can be used by people in power. Disasters can likewise legitimize or initiate certain actions of a government. The hurricane that struck the Dominican Republic on September 2 and 3, 1930 was such a disaster.

Only 16 days after Rafael Leonidas Trujillo[11] had been inaugurated as the leader of the Dominican Republic, a hurricane passed over the capital, causing unprecedented damage. The new

6 Ibidem, 28.

7 Christian Pfister, 'Learning from Nature-induced Disasters: Theoretical Considerations and Case Studies from Western Europe' in: Christof Mauch and Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses, Case Studies Towards a Global Environmental History* (Lanham, 2009) 18.

8 Christian Mauch, 'Introduction' in: Christof Mauch and Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses* (Lanham, 2009) 3.

9 Ibidem, 4.

10 Mark D. Anderson, *Disaster Writing, 148.*

11 Ibidem, 29.

regime saw its response to the hurricane as the first step in constructing a “magnificent new nation” that would leave behind its catastrophic past. According to Mark Anderson, the author of the book “*Disaster Writing”*, nature-induced disaster exercised a triple function in the regime's politics: “first, as a proving ground in which Trujillo could demonstrate the effectiveness of his leadership abilities; second, as an experimental laboratory for the totalitarian policies that he would later implement (...); and third, as a platform for the construction of [a] new national psychology that would replace the defeatism that, according to [Trujillo's] analysis of the nation's history, had characterized the Dominican collective consciousness since colonial times.”[12] The use, or usurpation, of a disaster supports the idea that the aftermath of a catastrophe can have a transformative “phoenix effect”[13] with respect to society. Indeed, in the years that followed, Trujillo and his collaborators used his response to Cyclone San Zenon (which would be the name henceforth used for the hurricane) as a key trope in the narrative legitimizing his rule, which lasted form 1930 until his death in 1961.[14]

Bearing in mind that Anderson centers specifically on disasters as a force to be reckoned with, concerning the cause of human or political history, he points out that few works, that deal with the Trujillato, refer to the 1930 hurricane at all. This notion fits in the idea that the impact of disasters on history is still largely neglected.

Mike Davis shares this point of view in his book *“Late Victorian Holocausts”*. He points out that: “almost without exception, modern historians (including Eric Hobsbawn and David Landes) writing about nineteenth-century world history have ignored the late Victorian mega-droughts and famines that engulfed what we now call the “third world”.”[15] These disasters, or series of disasters, caused the deaths of millions. It is like writing the history of the late twentieth century without mentioning the Great Leap forward famine or the Cambodia's killing fields.[16] The great famine of the late Victorian era was, according to Davis, in part caused by man. Extreme climatic conditions in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century coincided at a moment in history when the labor and products of tropical humanity were being dynamically conscripted into a London-centered world economy.[17] Davis points out that in this new economy grain-speculators and colonial proconsuls determined the price of grain and other foodstuffs, resulting in people dying within close proximity of actual food storages.

In contrast to other disciplines, historians have at their disposal a set of methodological tools that enables them to reflect the entire scope of human interaction with nature, including political and institutional ramifications, socially produced perceptions, and historically variable anxieties, as well as social and economic damage.[18] The fact that current disaster research is “clearly lacking in temporal depth”[19] makes it important to point out the strength of the historical approach: it has the capacity to acknowledge both the immediacy of the catastrophe – its sudden incidence, and the tragedy of the day – and the long-term effects of these incidents.[20]

1.3 Inventory

Now we need to inventory which disaster-types have struck the Lesser Antilles since the Second World War. This inventory will help to justify the choice of a disaster-type which has inflicted

12 Ibidem, 34.
13 Christian Mauch, 'Introduction' in: Christof Mauch and Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses,* 6.
14 Mark D. Anderson, *Disaster Writing*,, 29.
15 Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts, El Nino Famines and the making of the Third World* (London, 2001) 8.
16 Ibidem, 8.
17 Ibidem, 9.
18 Christian Mauch, 'Introduction' in: Christof Mauch and Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses,* 6
19 Ibidem, 5.
20 Ibidem, 6.

significant damage to the Lesser Antilles.

A useful source to inventory disasters is EM-DAT, which stands for Emergency Events Database.[21] It is compiled by the Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and is one of the most comprehensive publicly available databases on natural disasters. EM-DAT was created with the initial support of the WHO and the Belgian government and it is based at the University of Leuven. The main objective of the database is to support humanitarian action at national and international levels.[22] EM-DAT contains data of disasters form the year 1900 to the present. EM-DAT distinguishes two generic categories for disasters, natural and technological.[23] Technological disasters have no sub-divisions. Nature-induced disasters are sub-divided as is illustrated in table 1.1:

Sub-Group	Definition	Disaster Main Type
Geophysical	Events originating from solid earth	Earthquake, Volcano, Mass movement
Meteorological	Events caused by short-lived/small to meso scale atmospheric processes (in the spectrum from minutes to days)	Storm
Hydrological	Events caused by deviations in the normal water cycle and/or overflow of bodies of water caused by wind set-up	Flood, mass movement (wet)
Climatological	Events caused by long-lived/meso to macro scale processes (in the spectrum from intra-seasonal to multi-decadal climate variability)	Extreme Temperature, Drought, Wildfire
Biological	Disaster caused by the exposure of living organisms to germs and toxic substances	Epidemic, Insect infestation, Stampede

Table 1.1[24]

Table 1.1 shows how disasters can be sub-divided into separate groups. Now we can find out which disaster-types have struck the Lesser Antilles since WW II and how severe these have been. If we use EM-DAT to create a table which lists the number of nature-induced disasters that occurred by disaster type in the entire Caribbean since 1940, and a number of criteria which indicate how severe certain disaster-types have been, we get the following results:

Disaster Type	Number	Deaths	Total affected (,000)	Damage in US $ (,000)
Drought	23	0	3540	197639
Earthquake	12	222655	3708	8045000
Flood	117	517	4160	827382
Mass movement wet / landslides	6	390	2,4	0
Storm	283	16757	21315	35175896
Volcano	8	34	110	8000

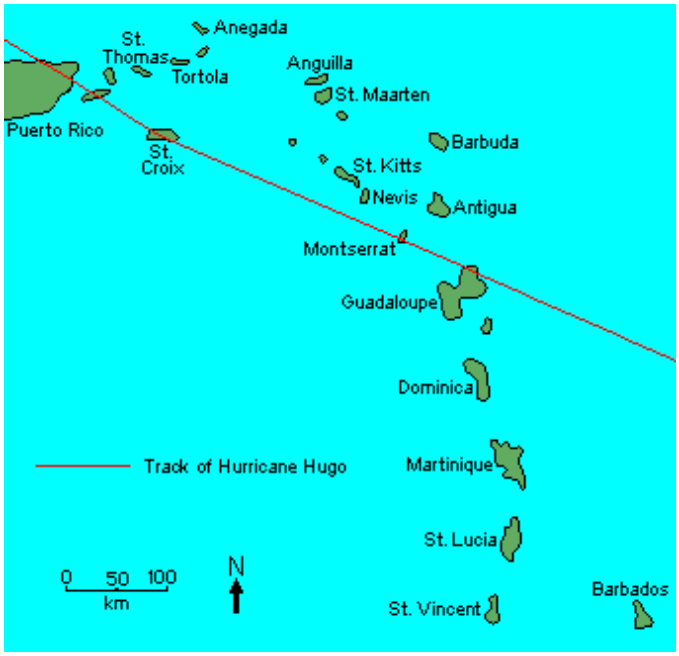
Table 1.2. Disaster-types, since 1940 in the entire Caribbean (Source: EM-DAT)

21 www.emdat.be
22 Ibidem.
23 Ibidem.
24 Ibidem.

It is clear that since the 1940s storms and floods have been the most frequent disaster-types in the region. The huge death toll concerning the earthquake disaster-type is mainly due to the earthquake which hit Haiti in 2010. A catastrophic disaster in scale, it is out of the scope of this paper, since Haiti is not a part of the Lesser Antilles. Taking this fact into account, it is obvious that storms, or hurricanes, are the most destructive nature-induced disasters in the Caribbean, given the number of total affected (which is the sum of people who required immediate assistance during a disaster, like people who were injured, displaced or became homeless), and the sustained damage, which is over $ 35 billion due to storms since the 1940s. I will mainly focus on storms, or hurricanes because these disaster-types have been severe enough to ensure the occurrence of disaster-relief efforts and because hurricanes have the habit of hitting multiple islands or areas, thus enabling comparative research.

1.4 Selecting island-states

Since the specific idea of the present study is to compare islands with different constitutional make-up, it makes sense to select those nature-induced disasters which have hit multiple islands in the Lesser Antilles. Hurricane Hugo, which struck the Lesser Antilles in 1989, meets this criterion (see map 1).



Map 1. Path of hurricane Hugo (1989)[25]

It severely hit the islands of Antigua, Montserrat and St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Martin. For this paper, each metropole and a sovereign entity should at least have one 'representative' entity. Antigua and Montserrat are both affiliated with the United Kingdom. Of the two I choose Montserrat, since more data is available for that island.

Subsequently, I select St Kitts and Nevis as the representative entity for the sovereign nations in the region. As stated, the subject for the first part of this study will be the Dutch part of St. Maarten

25 Map found on July 23, 2012 at: http://www.unesco.org/csi/act/cosalc/hur8.htm

and, subsequently, the response of the French part of Saint Martin to hurricane Luis. The fact that nature-induced disasters do not care for political borders makes St. Martin an excellent research subject. Multiple hurricanes have hit the island during our time frame, with one hurricane, Luis, sticking out. In 1995, Luis damaged or destroyed almost 90 percent of the buildings on St. Martin. All three islands are selected on the basis of two criteria. First, they were all struck by the same nature-induced disaster: hurricanes and in particular by hurricane Hugo. This allows for better comparison because time-dependent differences will thus be minimized.[26] Second, all islands experienced moderate to heavy damage, ensuring significant recovery activity.

26 P. R. Berke and T. Beatley, *After the Hurricane, Linking Recovery to Sustainable Development in the Caribbean* (London, 1997) 20.

2 Hurricanes on Saint Martin

The first part of this study will be about the Dutch part of Saint Martin, or *Sint Maarten* in Dutch. With regard to hurricane Luis, as mentioned above, I will also research the response of the French part.

First, it is necessary to establish what kind of constitutional options are available in theory. This will also be a useful guide for the remaining case-studies. To establish a starting point, I will subsequently investigate what kind of constitutional shape St. Maarten has had since decolonization began after the Second World War. In other words, what was the constitutional relationship of St. Maarten with the Netherlands Antilles, and what was the relationship with the Netherlands?

Thereafter, I will focus on a particular disaster in three stages.

Stage one: the predisaster period. In this section, I will initially examine the constitutional ties with regard to disaster-management. The question asked in this part is to what extent institutions on St. Maarten relied on assistance from the metropolis concerning disaster-management? In other words, who controlled the disaster-management institutions and who payed for them? And, subsequently, how did the disaster-management institutions operate? Have they increased disaster awareness amongst the population? Were there any disaster plans? Were there building codes? In short, was the disaster preparedness on the island adequately arranged?

Second, I will describe the disaster preparations during the advent of the actual disaster. Who was involved in the disaster preparation activities? Did local institutions and organizations take an active part in the disaster preparations? Or have the people relied on aid from the Netherlands Antilles' government, the Dutch government, or NGOs?

Stage two: impact. What was the actual damage caused by a specific disaster, in terms of human casualties and overall damage to buildings and the local infrastructure.

Stage three: recovery. First, in what way was the immediate recovery process undertaken? Who was active and who paid for the recovery activities? Local (St. Maarten), national (Netherlands Antilles), Dutch, or international governments and/or organizations?

Second, in a similar vein with respect to predisaster period, I will examine how the long term recovery took place and which institutions took part in it. Did disaster preparedness on St. Maarten intensify? And if so, in what manner was this done? Did local institutions receive additional aid from the Netherlands Antilles, the Dutch or international governments and/or organizations? The constitutional ties will especially be investigated. Has the aftermath of a specific disaster changed the constitutional ties with the Netherlands? To put it differently, have disasters caused the Dutch government to intensify or relax their relationship with St. Maarten and/or the Netherlands Antilles?

2.1 Constitutional status

The options concerning constitutional status range from total integration to full independence of a (former) colony or SNIJ. A referendum held in October 1993 in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI), also situated in the Lesser Antilles, illustrates some of the options. Each category in the referendum contained several specific statutory arrangements, which citizens would consider once a majority had decided on the general direction of the territory's legal evolution.[27] The three possibilities were:

1. complete integration into the United States through accession to statehood or by becoming an

27 Robert Aldrich and John Connell, *The Last Colonies* (Cambridge 1998) 16.

incorporated territory
2. continued or enhanced territorial status through a compact of federal relations, the adoption of legislation making the USVI a commonwealth or the continuation of the status quo, with the islands remaining an unincorporated territory;
3. withdrawal of United States sovereignty, with the USVI gaining complete independence or retaining ties with Washington through a treaty of free association.[28]

Another option would be complete integration into another state, however, this was inconceivable for the citizens of the USVI. A final possibility would have been the creation of a multi-state federation. One (short-lived) example of this was the British attempt to set up a West Indian Federation in the Caribbean in 1958, which should have included all British territories in the West Indies. In general, the three categories can be summarized as follows: 1. Complete integration into the mother country; 2. Status quo, or a (con)federal association; 3. Complete sovereignty, possibly extended with a treaty. Each of the entities discussed in this paper have a different constitutional status. I now turn my attention to the Dutch part of St. Maarten.

The decolonization process of the Dutch empire started directly after the Second World War in the Dutch East Indies. After a prolonged struggle between the Dutch and the people of the newly formed state of Indonesia, independence was granted by the Netherlands in 1949. In an effort to keep close ties with its former colony, the Dutch tried to create a union between its (former) colonies and the Netherlands. The effort was focused on creating a commonwealth in which the Netherlands and Indonesia would still have close relations. But, Indonesia proved to be uninterested in such a sort of associated statehood.

On the other side of the globe, in the West Indies, which was insignificant compared to Indonesia in many Dutch eyes, the idea of a union did not die with the independence of Indonesia. The Dutch decided to create two entities which would be unified with the Netherlands in the *Kingdom of the Netherlands*. One entity was Suriname and the other was the Netherlands Antilles, which comprised all of the Dutch islands in the Caribbean sea; Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire, in the southern Caribbean, and St Maarten, St Eustatius and Saba in the north-eastern Caribbean.

The *Statuut*, or Charter of the Kingdom, which defined the new constellation, was signed by Queen Juliana in the Hague on December 15, 1954. The Charter heralded a new era in the trans-Atlantic relationship. According to the preamble of the Charter the Kingdom partners voluntarily declared "to accept a new legal order in which they take care of their own interests autonomously, manage communal affairs on an equal footing, and accord each other assistance."[29] It further stated that the Crown would be the head of state and that it would be represented by governors in each of two countries. The Charter defined foreign policy, defence, citizenship, and the safeguarding of proper governmental administration as matters of common interest to be governed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In fact this kingdom government was simply delineated as the ruling Dutch cabinet, expanded to include one plenipotentiary minister for each of the Caribbean territories.[30] This still reflects the 'democratic deficit'[31] of the Kingdom, in the sense that it has a government, but lacks a corresponding parliament.

---

28 Ibidem, 17.

29 Preamble of the Charter of the Kingdom, http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002154/geldigheidsdatum_02-05-2012

30 Oostindie, G. 'Island jurisdictions of the Dutch Caribbean' in: Godfrey Baldacchino and David Milne, *The Case for Non-Sovereignty, Lessons from Sub-National Island Jurisdictions* (London 2009) 125.

31 Oostindie, G and Klinkers, I. *Knellende Koninkrijksbanden, Het Nederlandse dekolonisatiebeleid in de Caraïben, 1940-2000 [deel III]*(Amsterdam 2001) 409.

It is hard to phrase this new constitutional form in conventional terms. The federal and unitary traits that the text of the Charter exhibits, are no more than constitutional make-up.[32] The Kingdom functions more like a confederation, although it cannot be called that either, because it is not based on a treaty, the Countries are not independent states, and the organs of the Kingdom do have some - albeit very limited - power over the citizens of the Countries. The structure of the Kingdom does not fit any of the other traditional forms of government. It is usually called a construction sui generis, but it could also be called a "constitutional association" or a "cooperative structure governed by constitutional law"[33] It can also be described as a middle path between two extremes, on the one hand full sovereignty could have been granted, or, on the other hand, complete integration in the metropolis as a province was an option. These options were never seriously considered by all three parties during the negotiations of the Charter.

Thus, concerning the above mentioned constitutional options, the Charter of 1954 meant for St. Maarten that it now was an integral part of the Netherlands Antilles, and had a loose constitutional association with the Netherlands under the umbrella of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. At least in theory, Sint Maarten could count on assistance of its Kingdom-partners - in particular of the wealthy Netherlands - in case of an emergency.

2.2 Hurricanes

Fourteen major hurricanes and tropical storms have hit St. Maarten during the post war era, which are listed in the diagram below.

Year	Name	Damage (000 Fl.)	Killed	Homeless
1950	Dog			
1955	Alice	60		
1960	Donna	5000	7	>25 % of population
1966	Faith			
1989	Hugo			
1995	Luis	1000000	14	1000
1995	Marilyn			
1996	Bertha			
1998	Georges			
1999	Jose		1	
1999	Lenny		13	
2000	Debby			
2008	Omar			

Diagram 1.1 Hurricanes that struck St. Maarten[34] (missing information is due to a lack of data)

Since the late 1980s the frequency and intensity of hurricanes has in general increased. The 'Atlantic hurricane season' is an annual phenomenon, which lasts from June 1 to November 30. However, some

32 Hillebrink, S. *Political Decolonization and Self-Determination, The Case of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba* (Zutphen 2007) 186.
33 Hillebrink, S. *Political Decolonization and Self-Determination*, 337.
34 Www.emdat.be

hurricanes or tropical storms have occurred outside of this season. Four hurricanes will be reviewed in this chapter; Alice (1955), Donna (1960), Hugo (1989) and Luis (1995).

2.2.1 Hurricanes Alice and Donna

The first indication of how nature-induced disasters on St. Maarten were dealt with, is to be found in a newspaper from Curacao, the *Amigoe di Curacao*. It reports the occurrence of hurricane 'Alice', which struck the Leeward Island (if not mentioned otherwise, by Leeward islands I refer to the the Dutch Leeward islands, or SSS-islands; Saba St. Eustatius (Statia) and St. Maarten) on January third, 1955. Although the damage to St. Maarten was minimal, Saba was severely hit, especially its roads. There were no reports of casualties. During the next morning a committee was formed in Willemstad, the former capital of the Netherlands Antilles, situated on Curacao. It was led by Mr. Lopes, who was a member of the *Staten*, the parliament of the Netherlands Antilles. This committee had the goal to start with the relief effort immediately.[35] There was a rumor that a Dutch navy ship was asked to supply Saba with provisions, but this was not confirmed. After a week long trip to the Leeward Islands Mr Lopes reported that Hfl. 60.000,-[36] was required to aid the population. These funds should be raised by means of charity. Illustrative is the fact that the C.P.I.M / C.S.M donated Hfl. 17.000,-.[37] (C.P.I.M / C.S.M stood for *Curaçaosche Petroleum Industrie Maatschappij / Curaçaosche Scheepvaart Maatschappij*, which stand for *Curacao Petrol Industrial Company* and *Curacao Shipping Company*. There was a major oil refinery on Curacao, which employed a large part of the local population). This donation was the result of a fund raising activity amongst its employees. These facts indicate that there were no, or little disaster-relief funds available, or an unwillingness to provide in it.

It seems like there was practically no discussion about hurricane Alice in the Dutch parliament. Although a little more than a year after the hurricane struck a Dutch parliamentary delegation did visit the struck islands from January 19th until the 30th, including St. Maarten, there was, however, no talk about the aftermath of hurricane Alice.[38]

The next hurricane to be reviewed is Donna. It hit St. Maarten on the September fourth, 1960.[39] It caused 2 deaths. According to *gezaghebber* Beaujon of St. Maarten (a *gezaghebber* is comparable to a Dutch mayor): “hardly any building has remained undamaged”.[40] In addition, a bridge was destroyed and the airport was rendered useless due to the damage, also prohibiting radio traffic. The damage was estimated on Hfl. 5 million. The damage sustained to private property was estimated on Hfl. 1,5 Million. The Dutch government offered aid within two days. On the sixth of September prime minister Jonkheer of the Netherlands promised help for the affected island.[41] The other Kingdom-partner, Suriname, also offered aid to St. Maarten in particular. Financial aid was necessary, since the

35 Amigoe di Curacao: Weekblad voor de Curaçaosche eilanden, January 4, 1955.
36 Ibidem, January 15 1955.
37 Ibidem, February 16 1955.
38 A description of the journey conducted by Dutch parliament members to St. Maarten, July 19, 1955, http://www.statengeneraaldigitaal.nl/document?id=sgd%3A19551956%3A0000942andzoekopdracht%5Bvergaderjaar%5D%5Bvan%5D=1953+-+1954andzoekopdracht%5Bvergaderjaar%5D%5Btot%5D=1955+-+1956andzoekopdracht%5Bzoekwoorden%5D=sint+maartenandzoekopdracht%5Bkamer%5D%5B0%5D=Eerste+Kamerandzoekopdracht%5Bkamer%5D%5B1%5D=Tweede+Kamerandzoekopdracht%5Bkamer%5D%5B2%5D=Verenigde+Vergaderingandzoekopdracht%5Bkamer%5D%5B3%5D=UCV%2FOCVandzoekopdracht%5BdocumentType%5D=Alle+document+typesandzoekopdracht%5Bpagina%5D=1andzoekopdracht%5Bsortering%5D=relevantieandpagina=2andzoom=0.5andhighlights=aan
39 Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, September 5 1960.
40 Ibidem, September 7, 1960.
41 Nieuw Suriname: Surinaams nieuws- en advertentieblad, September 7 1960.

government of the Netherlands Antilles was coping with a lack of funds and could not compensate the total damage. The Netherlands Antilles government in Curacao responded to the disaster by sending observers to St. Maarten, indicating that there probably was no disaster-plan which could be put into operation immediately.

In the Netherlands, a fund raising campaign was initiated, headed by the Dutch Red Cross and the *Dutch fund for the Netherlands Antilles* (Nederlands Steunfonds voor de Nederlandse Antillen).[42] The Dutch government encouraged this campaign. On September 14 vice-premier Korthals gave a radio speech in which he stated that the provisional estimates of the total damage caused by Donna was around Hfl. 5 million. He concluded with saying; “I hope that everyone will be committed to make this action successful,”[43] referring to the fund raising campaign. Worth of note is the fact that the phone connection between the Dutch and the French parts were not operational until March 19, 1966, almost six years after the catastrophe.[44]

Hurricane Donna (often referred to as “Donnah” in the Dutch parliament) was discussed in both chambers of the Dutch parliament. The support of the Netherlands to St. Maarten was deemed to be evidence of the excellent relationship between the Netherlands and its Caribbean Kingdom-partners and St. Maarten' lasting status as a part of the Kingdom.[45] At the same time, it is striking that the better part of the Dutch aid was provided by private charity efforts.[46] Whether any aid is provided by the Dutch government was not discussed in parliament.

St. Maarten and the Netherlands Antilles were not adequately prepared to the onslaught of both hurricanes. Preparations were minimal and lacked any serious disaster-planning prior to the storm. The relief effort tended to be ad hoc and slow. The Dutch government tended to rely on charities from the populations of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles for its relief effort. They did focus on the importance of the ties between the two Kingdom-partners, but this statement can be seen as a lip service and not as real support to a part of the kingdom that was in need.

2.2.2 Hurricane Hugo

Preparations

Hugo was first reported by the *Amigoe* on September 14th, 1989. By the 16th, disaster preparations were well under way on the Leeward islands. Since hurricane Donna in 1960, which caused thousands of casualties throughout the Caribbean, there had been major improvements in the early-warning systems.[47] In general people were therefore warned on time for Hurricane Hugo. On St. Maarten many buildings were strengthened to cope with potential strong winds. Hotels engaged in serious and reasonably organized disaster preparedness. Many yachts and other ships were kept in the inner waters, because huge waves could destroy them in the outer waters. These waves, it was predicted, could probably render large sections of the island impassable, and could wash away large sections of beaches.[48] Lower areas were evacuated and everybody was urged to stay indoors. Local authorities, the Dutch Navy and the Red Cross were asked to prepare for an emergency. If St. Maarten

42 Ibidem, September 12 1960.
43 Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, September 15 1960.
44 Amigoe di Curacao, September 19 1966.
45 26th meeting Eerste Kamer, March 28, 1961, http://resourcessgd.kb.nl/SGD/19601961/PDF/SGD_19601961_0000027.pdf
46 33th meeting Tweede Kamer, December 20, 1960, http://resourcessgd.kb.nl/SGD/19601961/PDF/SGD_19601961_0000167.pdf
47 Algemeen Dagblad, September 18, 1989.
48 Amigoe di Curacao, September 14, 1989.

would ask for help, it could receive immediate aid from these institutions.

Impact

Hugo struck St. Martin on September 17, 1989. Although the hurricane passed the SSS-islands at a distance of 75 km, the damage caused by the hurricane was extensive and estimated on Hfl. 12 million. The first reports indicated that houses had collapsed, roofs were torn off, and trees and telephone poles had been ripped out of the ground.[49] This caused all phone connections to be broken with St. Maarten. A huge tidal wave had ruined large sections of beaches. Multiple yachts, which were kept safe in the Simpson Bay lagoon, sustained significant damage. The runway of the Juliana airport on St. Maarten was completely destroyed. Marines tried to get the airport operational again. Additional medical personal and material were bound to be flown in, as soon as the runway was cleared. The port facilities sustained major damage on St. Maarten. There were no serious injuries, however between 200 and 250 people became homeless. Hotels and holiday homes received extensive damage or were completely destroyed. Philipsburg, the capital of Dutch St. Maarten, was confronted with looting. Because the police was providing people with first aid, it was advised to businessman to keep their shops closed and have them guarded. The St. Maarten Red Cross did request additional personnel, but was in general able to cope with the situation. The Red Cross volunteers of Curacao could have potentially provided 120 people.[50] These people did have to request leaf from their employers. St. Eustatius and Saba were also hit by Hugo. Due to the sustained damage, these islands were also unreachable by phone. Marines were send over to assist these islands. The number of homeless on the SSS-islands was estimated to be around 3000. On St. Eustatius almost all houses were damaged.

Recovery

Dutch marines helped with the recovery activities. 34 marines, supplemented with 10 medical personnel, were flown in on Saturday from Curacao.[51] In addition, a frigate (the Pieter Floris) of the Dutch Royal Navy was headed for the struck area. The Antillean prime-minister, Liberia-Peters, requested the above mentioned aid as soon as it became clear that Hugo would hit the Leeward islands. The Dutch navy announced to send in two more plains to St. Maarten, which would be carrying additional marines and material. prime-minister of the Netherlands Antilles, Liberia-Peters, visited the struck islands. She stated that the Antillean government will do everything that is required to aid these islands. Besides the major damage, Hugo did also have a beneficial effect. The harbor of St. Maarten had become to shallow by mid 1989, and because of a lack of funds the local authorities were unable to dredge the harbor. However, Hugo caused the harbor to be at its original depth again.

The Antillean government expected aid from the Netherlands, like was provided in the past.[52] Antillean minister Gums told the Dutch government that St. Maarten would put in a formal request for financial aid with the Antillean government,which forwarded this bill to The Hague. The Dutch minister for Antillean affairs, minister Jan de Koning declared on September 30, that aid would be partially provided by means of soft loans and donations.[53] Only for those who had sustained 'considerable' damage were deemed eligible for aid. When De Koning was asked where this aid should

49 Telegraaf, September 18, 1989.
50 Amigoe di Curacao, September 18, 1989
51 Algemeen Dagblad, September 18, 1989.
52 NRC, September, 20 1989.
53 Amigoe di Curacao, September 30 1989.

be coming from he answered: “From the development budget of course.”[54] Remarkable is the fact that the European Community decided to sent aid of Hfl. 7,5 million to the hurricane struck Caribbean, including to St. Maarten.[55] The raising of funds by means of charity was again established. In the Netherlands a 'telethon' was held on television to raise funds. The network 'Veronica' had sent film crews to the struck islands to record the effects of Hugo.

Inhabitants, businesses and other institutions who had sustained damage by Hugo, were eligible to receive aid from the Netherlands. Excluded were those properties that were insured. The damage assessment was done by a Dutch damage expert. There were however limits; the lower limit was set on 750 guilders and the upper limit on 75.000 guilders.[56] Properties worth more than Hfl. 750.000 were excluded, since these were considered to be insured.[57] However, some of these properties were not or under insured. Other aid from the Dutch and the EEC was the funding of a shipment of building materials worth 440.000 guilders. De Koning also reported that the Netherlands would provide Hfl. 1.65 million for Saba, St. Eustatius and Bonaire. This money was however part of already promised development aid from the Dutch government to the Netherlands Antilles. Even so, the money was made available sooner, due to Hugo.

On Aruba, money was collected for the people of the Leeward islands. Two civil institutions on Curacao, the *Curaçaose Setel* and the *Landradio*, offered aid to the Leeward islands with material and know-how.[58] The Kiwanis Club on Curacao had opened a disaster fund to aid the victims of hurricane Hugo on the Leeward islands.

The Caribbean Association of Telecommunication companies, Canto, stated that it would concentrate its recovery activities on areas which 'stand alone' and have no (former) ties with a mother country. The Dutch Leeward island would thus receive no aid since they were bound to receive aid from the Antillean or Dutch governments. A number of banks also donated money. The Maduro and Curielsbank (MCB) and the Leeward Islands Bank bank donated Hfl. 60.000. Hfl. 30000 was send to St. Maarten en Hfl. 15.000 to Saba and Hfl. 15.000 to St. Eustatius.[59]

At that time minister De Koning did foresaw constitutional change.[60] The Netherlands Antilles would remain one entity. However, De Koning had the idea to split the Netherlands Antilles into two: one center with St. Maarten as the head of the Leeward islands, and one center being Curacao, with Bonaire as its 'subject'. De Koning stated that there first had to be political decisions by the government of the Netherlands Antilles before the the country would receive 'technical' support to help with any political change.

During the opening speech of meeting between the Kingdom-partners, the chairwoman of the Committee for Dutch, Antillean, and Aruban Affairs, Ms. Haas-Berger, stated the following:

> “I express my sympathies to the victims of Hugo. The hurricane has caused much suffering, in the personal, intangible and financial sphere(...). Natural disasters such as these are unimaginable in the Netherlands, there is no such thing like the Delta Plan conceivable to avoid [such] consequences. The willingness to accord each other with aid applies – particularly – in such circumstances.”[61]

54 Volkskrant, September 22, 1989.
55 Amigoe di Curacao, September 20 1989.
56 Ibidem, October 4, 1989.
57 Budget of the Dutch parliament (Begroting Staten-Generaal) 1990, http://resourcessgd.kb.nl/SGD/19891990/PDF/SGD_19891990_0003888.pdf
58 Amigoe di Curacao, September, 20 1989.
59 Ibidem, October, 4 1989
60 Volkskrant, September 22, 1989.
61 Opening Speech 'Parliamentary Contact Plan Netherlands-Netherlands Antilles-Aruba', Meeting September 25, 1989,

This quote shows two sides of the Dutch parliament. On the hand there is a willingness to aid the stricken Antilles, as is mentioned in the Charter of the Kingdom. On the other hand, a consequent and intensive disaster-management approach, similar to that of the Dutch Delta Plan was obviously inconceivable. This view can have many reasons. In 1989 it had been almost 30 years since a considerable hurricane had struck the Antilles. Therefore, it may have been deemed unnecessary to engage in extra disaster-preparedness. Also the nature of the catastrophe, a hurricane, was perhaps misunderstood. It seems that the view was that a hurricane can be so veracious that its consequences can not be avoided. In reality there were a range of activities that could have been undertaken to improve the disaster-preparedness; one can think of the construction of underground power-lines, reinforced roofs, adequate building codes, sea walls and an effective disaster-plan. The absence in the Dutch parliament of such proposals (an Antillean Delta Plan) presents a relationship that is mainly based on ad-hoc decisions when it comes to disaster-management. And an unwillingness to spent such an amount of money. Illustrative to this view is the fact that part of the funding which was made available to the struck islands, was in fact money already destined for these parts, only to be made available earlier.

2.2.3 Hurricane Luis, a comparison between Sint Maarten and Saint Martin

In this section I will first review the advent, impact and aftermath of hurricane Luis on the Dutch part of St. Maarten. Thereafter I will review the same hurricane on the French part; Saint Martin. Because the troubles with the illegal immigrants influenced the situation and reactions of both parts directly, this section will be reviewed at the end of the 'Dutch' review, which will include both parts. Thereafter, hurricane Luis will be examined on Saint Martin in the same way as is done with the other hurricanes.

Advent and impact

Luis was predicted to hit St. Maarten on the 1st of September 1995.[62] Immediately comparisons with Hugo were made with regard to the intensity of hurricane Luis in the media.[63] The local authorities on St. Maarten requested aid from the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles. From bases on the Windward islands, 56 marines were flown in to help the population of St. Maarten prepare for the hurricane.[64] Houses were reinforced and all the yachts were brought in the Simpson Bay for protection the storm.[65] It was estimated that 50 percent of the buildings would sustain damage.[66] Schools were set up as emergency hospitals. The population stored large amount of food and water. There were fourteen 'storm-proof' shelters built on the island.

On the 5th of September 1995 hurricane Luis hit the island of St. Maarten. It was soon labeled as the worst natural disaster ever to have hit the *Friendly island.*[67] Luis struck with incredible force. 80 percent of the houses were either significantly damaged or totally destroyed. 5 to 7000 people became homeless.[68] The Juliana-airport was completely flooded. This prohibited the arrival of aircraft with

http://resourcessgd.kb.nl/SGD/19891990/PDF/SGD_19891990_0003450.pdf

62 Rotterdams Dagblad, September 11, 1995.
63 Telegraaf, September 5, 1995
64 Ibidem, September 9, 1995.
65 Amigoe di Curacao, September 5, 1995.
66 Telegraaf, September 9, 1995.
67 Algemeen Dagblad, September 7, 1995.
68 Amigoe di Curacao, September 11, 1995.

emergency materials and military personnel. The shanty towns, which inhabited thousands of illegal immigrants were completely destroyed by Luis. Most of the large hotels were spared any significant damage because they were properly constructed. Electricity and phone poles had been destroyed, rendering large sections of the island without power, and the communications with the island to be broken. All major roads were blocked by debris or trees. In addition, the water facilities were also inoperative. For days water had to distributed by water trucks, or handed out with bottles. In the Simpson Bay most of the 1200 yachts were either sunk or washed upon the shore by huge waves.[69] The hospital on St. Maarten was rendered useless. Saba and St. Eustatius were also struck by Luis, however much less severe than St. Maarten.

Recovery

In the wake of the disaster people started looting. Although some supplies, like food and water, were in short supply, most people started to loot valuables or even clothing. Some supermarkets made their supplies available to the general public. During the first days after the storm the local police force, supported by the Dutch marines, had to stop these looters and restore order. Therefore they could not start with the recovery process. The local authorities installed a curfew to curb the looting, no one was allowed outside between 6 pm and 6 am.[70] A state of emergency was proclaimed by the local authorities. The marines also had to guard the dumps.[71] again prohibited the from engaging in the recovery process. Consumption of this food could contribute to a potential epidemic, which the local authorities feared. This was mainly due to the lack of sanitation in the slums near Philipsburg. Venezuela had sent over disinfection equipment to curb the threat of an epidemic.[72] Among the wounded some, according to the Dutch the *NRC*, had shot wounds.[73] According to the paper, these were caused by Dutch marines who had shot them in an attempt to stop the looting. This was by the Dutch military. Only one aimed shot was confirmed by the Dutch commander of the marines.[74]

In addition to the already present marines, the Dutch government sen a great number of rescue workers and aid material; extra military personnel was flown in, a detachment of Dutch fire-fighter were flown in at the request of the ministry of Internal Affairs. A day after the hurricane had struck the airport was cleared of debris and reopened. Two Dutch aircraft were flown in which carried 40 tons of rescue equipment and around 60 people, including firemen and physicians.[75] The Dutch emergency personnel was instructed to lead local firemen, since the fire brigade on the island lacked qualified staff. In addition an air-bridge was set up between Curacao and St. Maarten. Personnel and material were flown in, and wounded were flown out. Altogether around a thousand Dutch aid workers were flown or shipped in to support St. Maarten with the reconstruction process.

Directly after Luis and as soon as it became clear that the damage was significant, the Dutch ministry of Defense installed a joint crisis-center, which represented multiple Dutch government departments.[76] The Dutch Navy was responsible for the aid which was sen over from the Netherlands. The overall coordination on St. Maarten was, at least in theory, entrusted with the local authorities. Formally, the local gezaghebber, Mr. Richardson, was the head of the aid effort. But in the chaos after

69 Volkskrant, October, 9, 1995.
70 NRC, September 11, 1995.
71 Rotterdam Dagblad, September 11, 1995.
72 Trouw, September 9, 1995.
73 NRC, September 11, 1995.
74 Ibidem, September 12, 1995.
75 Rotterdams Dagblad, September 6, 1995.
76 Staatscourant, September 6, 1995.

the storm most Dutch aid workers made their own plans.

The initial recovery process proved indeed to be very chaotic. There was no central coordination in Philipsburg to direct the aid effort. On the French side, communication was restored within a day. A reporter of the Antillean newspaper, *Amigoe di Curacao*, asked why immediately after the storm the island was completely looted, without a response of the local authorities?[77] The authorities new that the hurricane was coming, days in advance. The same reporter wrote: "Would it not have made more sense if before the disaster a group of people with the necessary skills would have been sent to St. Maarten, instead of thereafter?"[78]

The autonomous status of the Netherlands Antilles within the Kingdom had put the Dutch military in a delicate position. They wanted to help, but Gezaghebber Richardson had the ultimate authority and last say in many matters. One example is the reopening of the gas stations. After a few days Richardson had prioritized repairs for the gas stations.[79] When they were opened, the long lines in front of the gas stations caused a chaos on the roads. This in turn caused that Dutch rescue workers could not do their work fast, which lead to much complaining with the Dutch rescue workers. They stated that many disaster tourists from the French visited the struck area, causing additional traffic jams. After a few days aid transports were accompanied by police motorists, thus speeding the transport of materials and food stuffs and water. Apart from constitutional troubles, there still was the colonial past, which hampered a truly friendly relationship between the Netherlands and St. Maarten. For example in 1992 St. Maarten was put under legal constraint and the Netherlands effectively took over the budget planning of the island.[80] The Netherlands were blamed to behave in a colonial way. The Dutch stated that the island was a victim of corruption.

The Dutch government decided to sen in a team of experts to St. Maarten. This team had to assess which aid projects the Netherlands could support or engage in. According to Dutch prime-minister, Mr. Kok, the government decided for a project-based approach, instead of simply transferring funds.[81] The team should report within a month which problems should be addressed first. The Dutch government wanted the tour operators to keep St. Maarten on their destination lists.

The Red Cross in the Netherlands got its information through the Red Cross on Curacao, however the connection between St. Maarten and Curacao was very poor. A Dutch Red Cross operative had to be sent to St. Maarten with a satellite phone to report on the circumstances.[82] The arrival of hurricane Marilyn, only ten days after Luis, delayed the recovery process. Thankfully, Marilyn proved to be much less severe, although some debris and tents from the camp were blown around and heavy rains further damaged the roofless buildings' interiors.

The Antillean community in the Netherlands opened a bank account. Donations were primarily focused on help for the financially disadvantaged and victims of the storm. Ten days after Luis tens of thousands of guilders were already donated for the victims of Luis.[83] Multiple charity actions were held throughout the Netherlands. The Dutch Julian Welfare-Fund donated Hfl. 1 million.[84] Rotterdam always had held close ties with the Antilles and The Rotterdam city council donated Hfl. 200.000.[85] The foundation 'Aid hurricane victims' collected Hfl. 600.000.[86] The money was made available for the

77 Amigoe di Curacao, September 8, 1995.
78 Ibidem.
79 Rotterdams Dagblad, September 16, 1995.
80 Rotterdams Dagblad, September 16, 1995.
81 Het Parool, September 6, 1995.
82 Trouw, September 11, 1995.
83 Financieel Dagblad, September 16, 1995.
84 Volkskrant, September 13, 1995.
85 Rotterdams Dagblad, September 26, 1995.
86 Trouw, September 26, 1995.

families of illegal immigrants. On Curacao a fund raiser was initiated by the local government.[87] Money and goods were collected by the Curacao Red Cross. Aruba also wanted to aid St. Maarten. The prime-minister of Aruba, Henny Eman, declared that the government would put a group of fire-man and other experts together. They would have to travel to the Leeward islands and on arrival would assess which aid is deemed to be necessary for the recovery.[88] On Aruba bank accounts were opened for donations for the victims of Luis.

The Netherlands Antilles donated Hfl. 25 million.[89] Minister Voorhoeve realized that this was all about the Antillean government could spare, since the they were in dire financial straits. Gezaghebber Richardson requested Hfl. 220 million.[90] He claimed that he needed these funds for the first few weeks of the disaster relief effort to ensure that everyone would be helped adequately. Moreover, Richardson was also making plans to save the tourist season. He wanted to restore enough hotel rooms to ensure that the tourist would keep on coming on. He was therefore more interested in the reconstruction of the hotels instead of the houses or public buildings.

As stated, the Dutch government did agree in providing some funds. First Hfl. 10 million was granted, later Hfl. 15 million was added. [91] It was estimated than between Hfl. 1 and 2 billion worth of damage was caused by Luis.[92] The Dutch newspaper the *Financieel Dagblad,* stated that the damage was Hfl. two billion.[93] Minister Pronk of development aid and Minister Voorhoeve of Antillean affairs declared that they would give substantial aid to the struck island.[94] The Hague was however reluctant to promise any large amounts of money. Illustrative is the plea of the *Nederlandse Participatie Maatschappij voor de Nederlandse Antillen* (Dutch Participation Company for the Netherlands Antilles) for a national plan for the reconstruction of the island.[95] For example the already obsolete, and recently damaged airport should be reconstructed. A spokesman of the department of Antillean affairs replied: “Everybody can see on TV that the damage is huge, however it is to early to assess what the Netherlands can do. We must first wait for the plans of the Antillean government. According to us, there is no need for a national rescue plan for St. Maarten.”[96] The spokesman recognized that the hurricane was disastrous for the economy of the Antilles. Mainly because they already had a huge deficit. Since tourism brought in hundreds of millions of revenue for the Antillean treasury, the deficit was bound to grow after Luis, which had wrecked the tourist infrastructure. The tourist sector earned Hfl. 850 million of the total of Hfl. 1 billion of revenue for Dutch St. Maarten.[97] It was estimated that there would be 15 to 20 percent less revenue from the tourist sector in '95 and '96.[98] According to the Curacao Bankers Association, the Netherlands Antilles had to conduct major budget cuts.

According to minister Voorhoeve, the damage caused by Luis was estimated on Hfl. 1 billion.[99] 50 percent was damage inflicted to public services and 50 percent was inflicted to private property. The damage inflicted to the yachts was not jet included. About Hfl. 300 million was insured by private insurance companies. In a similar vein when hurricane Hugo struck in 1989, the minister stated that the

87 Amigoe di Curacao, September 6, 1995.
88 Ibidem.
89 Trouw, September 13, 1995.
90 Leidsch Dagblad, September 16, 1995.
91 Staatscourant. September 27, 1995.
92 Trouw, September 11, 1995.
93 Financieel Dagblad, September 12, 1995.
94 Trouw, September 12, 1995.
95 Financieel Dagblad, September 12, 1995.
96 Ibidem.
97 Leidsch Dagblad, September 16, 1995,
98 Ibidem.
99 Financieel Dagblad, October 20, 1995.

civilians should not count on the government to pay for the uninsured damage. Voorhoeve said that the aid from the Netherlands consist of donations, loans, guarantees and he wanted to focus on the most important public facilities. A Dutch former major, Roozemond, headed the Committe Reconstruction St. Maarten (Commissie Wederopbouw St. Maarten).[100] Voorhoeve expected a report by the committee in two weeks. This committee had to establish how the money should be spend, so which projects should receive aid. The Dutch government intended to keep total control of the aid related expenditures, this was deemed to be patronizing according to the Dutch parliament.

St. Maarten also received help from Brussels. Dutch members of the European Parliament requested structural support for the victims of Luis on St. Maarten. The European Parliament should ask the European Commission to work with the World Bank, the inter-American Development Bank and the Netherlands. “Since only a fast and coordinated approach could stop the suffering of the population and save the coming tourist season”, according to two Dutch liberal European parliament members. St. Maarten received Hfl. 1.2 million from Brussels.[101] The money would be made available to the Dutch Red Cross and the local authorities. In total, the European Commission spent over Hfl. 2 million on the Caribbean islands which had been struck by Luis. The UN had also declared to come to the aid of St. Maarten. There was $ 80.000 made available for the purchase of materials.[102]

On the 14th of October the last military personal left St. Maarten. In total 847 soldiers were engaged in the recovery activity on the island.[103] According to commander Koeman, the operations on the Leeward islands were done in record time. The recovery was done in steps. A number of marines were present prior to the storm, they helped people prepare for the storm. The second step was the assistance of the police. Dutch marines helped to keep order. Buildings had to be protected from looters and the curfew had to be enforced. Subsequently, the emergency aid for the inhabitants started, with the construction of camps. The military also cleared debris and waste and made additional repairs to public buildings.

During the first six months after Luis the tourist industry was largely restored. Tourists were welcome again on November 1, 1995.[104] By mid November two American airlines had decided to start flying en route to St. Maarten once every week. In addition, cruise ships were also coming in again. Although the tourist facilities were restored rapidly, behind the facade, the *Friendly island* was still a big mess. Most public facilities and large numbers of houses were still in disarray. In the class rooms, water and food were still handed out by mid November.[105] Many people were still living in great poverty. A local politician, Vance James, stated: “We have been spoiled, we have not experienced a big hurricane in 35 years. We just built lots of buildings without asking ourselves whether the houses would be hurricane-proof. It is striking that most older homes have remained in one piece. There has been spent much on housing, but only to make them more beautiful and bigger.”[106] Not until early December, when containers furnished as houses arrived on St. Maarten, could the camp be replaced.[107] The container-camp included sanitation, a restaurant and recreational facilities. It could accommodate up to 600 individuals. There were not many people who wanted to live in the containers. For the containers people had to pay rent. The containers actually were bedrooms without sanitation. Eating cooking, washing and recreation took place in communal areas. Richardson stated after Luis: “We are

100Volkskrant, October 9, 1995.
101Het Parool, December 1, 1995.
102Rotterdams dagblad, October, 26, 1995.
103Volkskrant, September 14, 1995.
104Parool, October 23, 1995.
105Telegraaf, November 10, 1995.
106Trouw, December 12, 1995.
107Haagsche Courant, December 8, 1995.

not going to rebuild St. Maarten, we are going to improve it."[108] The island would be 'a totally new island' by 1999. In the future it would be hurricane proof due to rigid building codes. According to Elsje Wilson, an employee of a local museum, Luis brought people together: "People sheltered each other, spoke to their neighbors. Everyone has experienced the same thing, rich or poor. "How is your roof", was a common phrase (…) it is as if the society has become more open (…) You have the feeling you are being governed, politicians make sure that their message comes across."[109]

Authority crisis

The hurricane could not have happened on a worse moment with regard to finance. The Netherlands Antilles were in a dire financial situation. The Netherlands Antilles treasury had a debt of Hfl. 2,3 billion, Aruba had a debt of Hfl. 1,1 billion[110] with a combined GDP of Hfl. 6 billion.[111] Curacao had an immediate funding problem. The government of the Netherlands Antilles was already planning major budget cuts, and increased taxation. This program started at the same moment when Luis struck. Hfl. 600 million of the treasury came from St. Maarten, per annum.[112] Since the tourist sector of St. Maarten was severely struck, it was assumed that a major budget deficit would arise. prime-minister Pourier had a plan to have the entire Netherlands Antilles be declared a disaster area by the UN. In doing so the Antilles could claim international support. The Dutch government responded by making the reconstruction of St. Maarten the new aim for the budget of department of Antillean and Aruban affairs.[113]

The Netherlands would provide the aid for reconstruction in parts and per project to prevent the aid from falling in the hands of the mafia. International criminals were, according to Dutch government officials, preying on the aid.[114] Richardson would also receive more authority. Voorhoeve wanted to give more authority to Richardson that he could act fast. This should prevent that the reconstruction of the island would become a mess. According to Voorhoeve, in these kinds of situation there is: "usually less adequate control".[115] Voorhoeve stated that the Netherlands would provide more money, but first a better reconstruction plan had to be made by the authorities of St. Maarten. The money that would be donated would be given in parts.

The Netherlands Antillean parliament wanted to stop the plans of the Dutch government to give more authority to Richardson with regard to the reconstruction process. This would effectively stop the democratic process on St. Maarten. The Antillean parliament proposed an emergency law to alter the Dutch plan.[116] Former prime-minister Liberia-Peters called the Dutch approach 'a crisis of trust'.[117] prime-minister Kok of the Netherlands stated during a visit to the Antilles that: "Talking about Dutch pressure (when referring to the Dutch plan to grant Richardson more authority) is an example of a debate which has gone wrong. The matter at hand is to help St. Maarten, quickly and effectively and that the spending [of aid] should be conducted in an appropriate manner. Everything else is not of interest."[118] prime-minister Kok thus countered any criticism with regard to the arisen crisis of

108Trouw, December 12, 1995.
109Ibidem.
110Haagsche Courant, September 9, 1995.
111NRC, September 19, 1995.
112Nederlands Dagblad, September 19, 1995.
113Haagsche Courant, September 9, 1995.
114Algemeen Dagblad, September 22, 1995.
115Ibidem, September 19, 1995.
116Ibidem, September 23, 1995.
117Ibidem.
118Amigoe di Curacao, September 29, 1995.

authority. Kok deemed it of vital importance to bypass the Netherlands Antilles and the local democratic process of St. Maarten to adequately aid the struck island. A majority in the Netherlands Antilles' parliament wanted to give Richardson an advantageous position but he should not have all control. The Antillean parliament still wanted that he would have to discuss his decisions with the local executive council and the local island council, the elected democratic organs. The gezaghebber was not elected but appointed by the Crown, just like a Dutch major. Newspapers on Curacao were worried about the plan, and even wrote about a return of St. Maarten under Dutch rule with the aid of gezaghebber Richardson.[119] Another breaking point was the time span of the proposal of the Dutch to give more power to Richardson. The Dutch demanded that regulation would remain in effect until April 1 1996. The Antillean government wanted it to end on December 31 1995.[120] The Kingdom cabinet or *Rijksministerraad* (which included the Dutch government and the Antillean ministers plenipotentiary) agreed with the temporary emergency law in which additional powers had been granted to the gezaghebber, Richardson.[121] Furthermore, the Dutch government stipulated that the Dutch financial donations for the reconstruction of St. Maarten would not have to be provided to a fund which was set up by the Netherlands Antilles.[122] This was also the case for international donations. Like those from the European Union and the World Bank. Vice prime-minister Dijkstal said that the Netherlands would only finance projects that had been selected by a team of experts. Dijkstal: “It is more appropriate if the funding is controlled from the Netherlands for the time being.”[123] The emergency law would remain into effect until January 1, 1996. The normal powers of executive council and the island council would not be affected more than is necessary. In effect, the democratic process on St. Maarten now took place after decisions had been made, instead of prior to any decisions or proposals had been made. This limited the democratic process on the island. Under the emergency law the governor of the Netherlands Antilles would have a supervisory role. If the span of the emergency law would be deemed to be to short, it could have been extended until April 1, 1996. The emergency law was annulled on January 1, 1996.[124] In addition, the supervision on St. Maarten's budget would be canceled at the end of January 1996. Voorhoeve stated that the supervision caused to many problems. The island needed constant permission from the the government in Willemstad. Now the island could regain its trust.

Another issue was with The Dutch National Bank (DNB), which provided a loan of over Hfl. 200 million.[125] This loan should be used to pay a part of the debt of the Netherlands Antilles. The loan was part of an aid program of the IMF for the Netherlands Antilles. Since the country was not a member of the IMF, the loan had to be provided through the Netherlands. The economic situation on the Antilles was according to the IMF 'very serious'.[126] There was a growing budget deficit, growing public debt and a the foreign exchange reserves were also dropping. A part of the Kingdom had to subject itself to an IMF program for the first time in 50 years. The Dutch parliament supported the IMF. A spokesman of the CDA, Mulder- van Dam stated: “Interposition by a third party is necessary, since harsh measures by our (Dutch) government could be looked upon as an unwanted way of interference.”[127] The Dutch Bank would borrow money on the terms of the IMF. The IMF would supervise the projects, if a project was deemed successful by the IMF, more money would be lend to the Netherlands Antilles. The country had to repay the loan within three to five years.

119Rotterdams Dagblad, September 25, 1995.
120Algemeen Dagblad, September 23, 1995.
121Staatscourant, October 2, 1995.
122Amigoe di Curacao, September 30, 1995.
123Ibidem.
124Trouw, December 18, 1996.
125Algemeen Dagblad, November 17, 1995.
126Ibidem.
127NRC, November 18, 1995.

Illegal immigrants

Although Luis was indiscriminate with regard to social status, the *shanty towns*, which were populated by illegal immigrants from mainly Haiti and the Dominican Republic and whom constituted a cheap labor reservoir, were totally destroyed by Luis. The small shacks could not withstand the onslaught of the storm and virtually all illegal immigrants became homeless. Different sources state different numbers of illegal immigrants It was estimated by the Dutch newspaper *NRC*, that between 15 and 30 thousand, or more, illegal immigrants inhabited the island.[128] However the Dutch minister of Antillean affairs, Voorhoeve confirmed that around 12.000 illegal immigrants were present on the island.[129] This was the same number as the Antillean government confirmed.[130] It is remarkable and striking that the local gezaghebber of St. Maarten, Dennis Richardson, estimated the number to be closer to five thousand individuals.[131] Because these people were not registered, most of them were afraid to request or even receive aid, since they feared registration and subsequent deportation by the local authorities. Because the illegal immigrants were not registered and they avoided contact with any rescue personal, many people thought that many of them had died during the storm. A rumor which proved to be very persistent. The Dutch looked for bodies with dogs, but none were found.[132]

Richardson, wanted to finish what Luis had started and made plans to clear the slums. He already had made plans prior to the storm. In the week after the storm a camp was built for the inhabitants of the slums. People were encouraged to take up residence in the camps. However, as stated, most of them feared registration and eviction. Therefore only around 300 people actually inhabited the camp.[133] It could accommodate up to 1200 people. Overall, half of the camp was inhabited. Another reason why only 300 people inhabited the camp was that there were no prospects with regard to any new housing programs, a stay in the camps was still indefinite, but could also been seen as an improvement. Most of the slums lacked any sanitation. At least in the camp there was adequate sanitation and drinking water available.

On the 12th of September a local newspaper on St. Maarten, *the Guardian*, claimed that Dutch marines were going to demolish the shanty towns.[134] According to the commander of the Dutch military, Dutch soldiers were not allowed to do this. This was supported by the prime-minister of the Netherlands, Mr. Kok, who said that the marines would not assist in any deportations.[135] Mr. Kok said in the Dutch parliament: “The assistance is explicitly not used for the forced eviction of inhabitants of the slums or forced removal of illegal aliens.”[136] The marines would only assist in keeping order on the island. The slums had to be demolished by the police of St. Maarten. prime-minister Pourier of the Netherlands Antilles, stated that he was not planning to deport the illegal immigrants. This statement took away the fear from the Dutch soldiers that they might had to evacuate and demolish the slums. Pourier recognized that these illegal immigrants, which he estimated to be around 10 to 20 thousand,

128Ibidem, September 12, 1995.
129Financieel Dagblad, October 20, 1995.
130NRC, October 12, 1995
131Ibidem.
132Ibidem, September 12, 1995.
133Ibidem, October 12, 1995.
134NRC, September 12, 1995.
135Volkskrant, September 13, 1995.
136From the archives (*Handelingen*) of the Dutch parliament. 101St meeting of the Dutch parliament, September 12, 1995, https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/h-tk-19941995-101-6137-6138.html?zoekcriteria=%3fzkt%3dUitgebreid%26pst%3dStaatsblad%257cStaatscourant%257cTractatenblad%257cParlementaireDocumenten%26vrt%3dorkaan%2bluis%26zkd%3dInDeGeheleText%26dpr%3dAlle%26spd%3d20120621%26epd%3d20120621%26sdt%3dDatumPublicatie%26ap%3d%26pnr%3d1%26rpp%3d10andresultIndex=1andsorttype=1andsortorder=8

were needed for the economy of St. Maarten.[137] He wanted to grant these illegal immigrants some kind of legal status, but he was uncertain about what kind of status these immigrants should receive. Pourier had stated in the Antillean parliament that deportation of the illegal immigrants was not consistent with the principle of good governance, with the human rights and the ambition of the Antilles to further integrate themselves in to the Caribbean. However, the Antillean government and the local government of St. Maarten were afraid that the shanty towns would be rebuild. Pourier stated that these slums were a thing of the past.

Richardson also stated that the illegal immigrants would not be deported and that the aid effort was focused on all inhabitants of island, legal or illegal.[138] People who wanted to leave to their country of origin, and did not have enough money for a flight, were offered the possibility to leave the island with a flight provided by the local government. 1500 illegal immigrants made use of this offer, and left for their place of origin.[139] Their homes were destroyed and there probably would not be any work in the tourist sector any time soon. Richardson had already made plans in June of 1995 to demolish the shanty towns.[140] But, because of Luis, Richardson wanted to hurry his plans. In the mean time he wanted to house the population of the slums in the camps. Thereafter adequate housing should be constructed for the. In due time illegal immigrants should be integrated into the society with a legal status, which would grant them at least working permits. About, three to four thousand could receive a work permit.[141] As stated, Richardson estimated the number of illegal immigrants to be around five thousand. One of the reasons a lot of these illegal immigrants still had no residence permits, according to Richardson, was because the local authorities could not handle all the requests.[142] Although Richardson had mentioned that no one should be deported, he broke his promise. By early October the police started to evict illegal immigrants. Only people who could not demonstrate that they had been on St. Maarten prior to the storm, or had requested a housing permit were evicted.[143]

Members of European Parliament heard about the possible deportations from St. Maarten, they called for humane shelters for the illegal immigrants.[144] The storm should not be used as an excuse to evacuate these people. In the Netherlands, prime-minister Kok said that deportation of the illegal immigrants was .[145] But the Dutch could not stop any deportation, since the Netherlands Antilles had an autonomous status within the Kingdom.

There were plans for improved housing for the slum dwellers. The island' local government had hired an engineering company by mid September to make plans for a new and permanent residential area, which would house the inhabitants of the camps.[146] The costs for this enterprise would be payed by the donations which were given by the Dutch and Antillean governments. But the local government had not received more than Hfl. 35 million, and this was hardly enough to reconstruct the island. The minister of Antillean affairs, Joris Voorhoeve was very critical about the plan to bulldoze the shanty towns. He stated that the reconstruction process should be prioritized.[147] The minister made agreements with the local authorities concerning the illegal immigrants. They should be able to register themselves

137NRC, September 13, 1995.
138Trouw, September 13, 1995.
139Parool, September 7, 1996.
140Trouw, September 13, 1995.
141NRC, October 12, 1995.
142Ibidem.
143Amigoe di Curacao, October 4, 1995.
144Staatscourant, September 21, 1995.
145Ibidem.
146NRC, September 14, 1995.
147Rotterdams Dagblad, September 19, 1995.

and than they would be able to build dwellings on small plots.[148] These plots would be connected to water, electricity and sewage. However, these plots were not yet available when Richardson wanted to start the demolition of the shanty towns. Richardson wanted to continue his plan and was bound to start with the forceful evacuation of the slums. However, a spokesman kept delaying the evacuation of the slums. He stated that the evacuation would start on Wednesday, but earlier he was just as firm about Monday and Tuesday.[149] In the end a local civil servant stated that about a third of the slums would not be demolished.[150] It appears that Richardson was trying to put pressure on the illegal immigrants by threatening to demolish their former living areas to force them into the camps, as is shown, without much result. It did lead to other complications. For instance, the idea appeared that the Dutch marines had to assist in the evacuation and subsequent destruction of the slums. However the Dutch were not planning to participate in the evacuation.

Two months after Luis 'Tent City', the camp which was constructed bu the Dutch military, had become very crowded. Illegal immigrants came to the camp when they heard that if would be registered, they could probably stay. Whoever remained unregistered could be arrested and deported out of St. Maarten.[151] Antilleans, who were not welcome anymore with their families or friends, inhabited Tent City too. Conditions were far from ideal. The camp was full and people had to wait until another camp was finished and for the arrival of 1200 emergency-homes, which were ordered in the Netherlands and the United States. As mentioned above, some containers, furnished as 'houses' arrived on St. Maarten in the first week of December.

French reaction concerning illegal immigrants

The French proved to be far more rigid and strict in their treatment of the illegal immigrants. The authorities on the French part of Saint Martin urged any illegal immigrants, mainly Haitians, to register themselves. It was estimated that around 7000 illegal immigrants inhabited French St. Maarten.[152] They had to report themselves in camps, subsequently they would be flown back to their mother countries at the expense of the government. If they failed to do so they would be removed out of the country. The French, like their 'Dutch' counterparts, wanted to rid themselves of the shanty towns. Gendarmes had guarded the border with Dutch St. Maarten to prevent any Haitians or Dominicans access to the French part. The French were afraid of a 'Dutch' exodus, since Richardson had announced first to bulldoze the slums. Only a few illegal immigrants decided to report themselves at the camps on both sides of the islands. No one really felt like leaving their slum and lie 'indefinitely' in a muddy camp. As mentioned above, not until early December, when containers furnished as houses arrived on St. Maarten, could the camp be replaced.[153] The container-camp could accommodate up to 600 individuals.

There was much comment on the assistance after Luis. The population was displeased about the fact that the assistance on the French part of Saint Martin was done much faster and more adequately. The French government had sent a military disaster team to Saint Martin, which started to clear the roads and repair the houses immediately. However, Marigot was significantly less damaged than Philipsburg. Most remained in tact and those who did not, sustained minor damage.[154] There seemed to

148NRC, September 18, 1995.
149Volkskrant, September 19, 1995.
150Ibidem, September 21, 1995.
151Amigoe di Curacao, December 1, 1995.
152Volkskrant, September 21, 1995.
153Haagsche Courant, December 8, 1995.
154NRC, September 13, 1995.

be hardly any damage to buildings, due to strict building codes on the French part, which the Dutch part lacked. According to the Dutch Naval commander, J.W de Jager, the damage which was inflicted by Luis on the French part of the island was much less severe.[155] In contrast with the Dutch part, the communication and infrastructure largely remained undamaged. Therefore, according to De Jager, the local population could be aided immediately. However, the infrastructure was much better prior to the storm on the French part. According to many people on both sides of the island, the French authorities were better prepared for the hurricane than the Dutch. A Dutch fire-man rejected this: "The French more or less declared martial law and have stationed 3000 soldiers, but even 5000 French soldiers could not have solved it here on the Dutch side."[156] However, besides Marigot, the French part also looked desolate, and many trees had been uprooted. The *Bidonville* on the French part was also washed away and would not be rebuild. The French forbade any reconstruction activities in the *Bidonville*.

Saint Martin and Luis

As already mentioned, hurricanes do not care for political borders. Luis made no exception to this rule. The hurricane also struck St. Martin with extreme force. First the constitutional status of Saint Martin will be reviewed. Thereafter hurricane Luis will be researched.

Constitutional status

The French decided to incorporate their French dependencies in the Caribbean into the French state. This procedure was called *départementalisation* and was initiated in 1946. In effect the French Caribbean became an integral part of the French republic, by creating the *départements d'outre-mer* (DOM), which were on equal constitutional footing with their counterparts in the mainland. Its people became French citizens, with the right to vote in the presidential elections. In short, French colonial thinking followed the premise that as the Republic was a single unit, the territories forming integral parts should be assimilated thus establishing legal equality with the Republic.[157] Saint Martin was part of the DOM *Guadeloupe* in 1946. In 2003 the populations of St. Martin and St. Barthélemy voted in favor of secession from Guadeloupe in order to form separate overseas collectivities of France. This new status took effect in 2007.

Hurricane Luis

Advent

Luis hit St. Martin on the fifth of September 1995. In response to the advent of the hurricane, the metropolis sent a detachment of 230 men of the *Sécurité civile* with 20 tons of equipment.[158] They were positioned in Martinique, but would be sent over to St. Martin as soon as the storm had passed and the airport would be re-opened.

Impact

155Algemeen Dagblad, September 12, 1995.
156NRC, September 13, 1995.
157Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers, *Decolonising the Caribbean, Dutch Policies in a Comparative Perspective* (Amsterdam 2003) 31.
158Sud-Ouest, September 6 1995.

At least a thousand people became homeless. Moreover, one death and one missing person were reported the day after the hurricane. The island became completely unrecognizable, most homes had lost their roofs due to the excessive storm. Cargo ships lay on dry land, the Haitian neighborhoods were completely destroyed, the marina no longer existed and major hotels were severely damaged. All the boats were either sunk or washed upon the shore. The roads were impassable due to fallen trees and debris. Even new buildings lost their roofs according to the major of St. Martin, Albert Fleming.[159] He stated that: "There is huge damage," but he appreciated that, "through information and security measures", there have been no serious injuries.[160] The desalination plant was out of order for a few days. As a result the island was without water and electricity. According to Mr Fleming, the first priority was to repair the roofs and to relocate and feed the 5000 Haitians who lived in barracks prior to the hurricane and to provide them with better housing. He was also concerned with the thousands of homeless people. Fleming stated: "I will house them and feed them."[161] The French Navy would also send assistance to St. Martin.

During the following days it became clear that on St. Martin at least 8 lives had been lost due to Luis. Two thousand people became homeless. 90 percent of the buildings in Marigot, the capital of the French part of St. Martin, were damaged.

Recovery

The French Ministry of Housing announced that it would provide emergency aid with a worth of FF 25 million (which is $ 4,8 million) to meet the primary needs of shelter.[162] After a trip by the Minister of overseas affairs, Jean-Jacqies de Peretti, to the struck islands, he subsequently declared a state of emergency for the Caribbean islands of St. Martin and St. Barthélemy (which was also struck, however much less severe).

In the Dutch press, the French authorities' dealing with the hurricane were often used as a mirror for the Dutch. It was described as faster, more efficient and more sizable. In a number of ways, this might have been true: the number of marines and when they were employed (before the disaster) or the size of the relief funds. However, there were also instances where the discourse made less sense. For example with regard to the air traffic. One Dutch tourist, Mrs. Mulder, said that: "France and Air France have done everything to help their compatriots. The Netherlands and the KLM did nothing."[163] An airport operative supported this notion. He was amazed by the fact that the Dutch aircraft waited waited so long to land on the island, while French aircraft were already coming in to evacuate stranded tourists and inhabitants.[164] A dutch tourist stated that French and Columbian planes came in, everybody flew except for the KLM"[165] A spokesman understood that the reactions of the tourists, but assumed that the air controllers of the Juliana airport were simply following the list of the chartered flights.

159Ibidem, September 7 1995.
160Ibidem.
161Ibidem.
162Ibidem, September 8 1995.
163NRC, September 11, 1995.
164NRC, September 12, 1995.
165Volkskrant, September 12, 1995.

3 The comparative approach: hurricane Hugo in the Lesser Antilles

3.1 Montserrat

In this chapter I will examine the impact of hurricane Hugo on Montserrat and St. Kitts-Nevis. The aim is to put the experiences of Saint Martin in a broader scope. This broader scope can subsequently be used to compare the different islands (or island-parts) with regard to their ability to cope with hurricanes. First Montserrat will be examined, thereafter St. Kitts-Nevis will be researched. Like in the previous chapters, I will begin by describing the constitutional status of the island. Next, a number of hurricanes will be reviewed according to the same method which has been used in the previous chapter.

3.1.1 Constitutional status

The West-Indies were once dubbed the 'darlings of empire'. However, as the twentieth century progressed they became the sole remnants of the United Kingdom's formerly vast empire. After the Second World War, the British wanted to create a West Indian Federation which would include all British territories in the Caribbean. The British deemed bureaucratic centralization necessary for these territories, which in their view were unable to fulfill the obligations assumed by membership of international organizations; they were deemed unable to uphold a reasonable degree of self-government on their own; and unable to promote lasting political and economic progress if they were to remain separated and failed to deal with their problems in a larger context.[166] Until the creation of this federation in 1958, Montserrat was part of the Leeward Island Federation. Montserrat joined the short lived West Indian Federation, which fell apart in 1962. This federation may have been logical at the time, but its failure was sealed in the same regional fragmentation and lack of homogeneity which originally inspired these federal constructions.[167] The islands were competitive rather than complementary. In addition, the larger and wealthier islands did not want to take up the financial burden of the weaker islands, the latter did not want to be dominated by the larger ones. After four territories gained independence, the West Indian federation became the Eastern Caribbean Federation, but faced the same obstacles and was abandoned in 1965.[168]

After the disbanding of the West Indian Federation, each remaining Dependent Territory gained its own constitutional system, in contrast with the United Kingdom, most of these territories have written constitutions. In these territories, the Crown held broad legislative powers, in all areas deemed necessary for good governance.[169] As a result, the remaining British dependencies in the Caribbean have varying degrees of political dependency. Some, like Bermuda, are almost 'independent'. This island is one step away of being independent. In contrast, the Cayman Islands is of the Caribbean territories the most dependent.

In the later part of the 1960s, the United Kingdom granted the new status of 'Associated State' to

166Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers, *Decolonising the Caribbean*, 20.
167Ibidem, 21.
168Robert Aldrich and John Connell, *The Last Colonies*, 30.
169Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers, *Decolonising the Caribbean*, 22.

its remaining dependencies in the Caribbean. Under the form of association these territories were to be independent in all their domestic affairs, while the United Kingdom would assume responsibility for their defence and external relations.[170] By the end of the 1960s, British responsibility in the Caribbean thus extended to seven Associated States and six Dependent Territories. The latter, like Montserrat, preferred to remain dependent since they considered themselves too small and too poor to move towards Associated Statehood.

During the 1970s the British tried to rid themselves of their former colonies, only to make a complete U-turn in 1984 when the original position was retaken with the government declaring that it would not force independence upon its remaining territories.[171] During the 1990s this view was continued, and during the closing years of the decade there was a fresh impetus to modernize the existing ties. The territories were dubbed Overseas Territories (OTs) in 1999. In return for Britain's willingness to respect the wish of the islands to continue under British sovereignty, the OTs had to adhere to certain obligations, which included the observance of human rights, law and order and good governance.[172]

It is remarkable that – unlike the other metropoles in the region – the United Kingdom never supported its decolonization policies through economic aid.[173] This is a major difference with the Dutch approach, where development aid was given with the aim to prepare the Netherlands Antilles for independence. Also, Suriname was given a voluminous dowry when they parted with the Dutch Kingdom. These financial 'bonuses' were never granted to former British colonies, at the moment of their independence. Furthermore, there is a major difference between the French and British concerning decolonization. France argued that the DOMs were necessary to national security and status in world affairs and they provided advantages to the nation.[174] The British lacked such conviction and/or rhetoric completely. In other words, where the British seemed reluctant to retain some of their territories, the French seemed reluctant to grant them independence.

3.1.2 Hurricane Hugo

Predisaster situation

Prior to Hugo about 12 thousand people inhabited the small island of Montserrat. The economy was primarily dependent on tourism, and to a lesser extant on agriculture. In Plymouth there was a small seaport and a small airport. The capacity before Hugo for promoting hazard awareness and mitigation and the resources for disaster recovery could be classified as meager. Like many small islands in the region, there were not much resources that could be used for recovery on the island itself. Montserrat did have a disaster plan which was completed by the local government in 1987. It specified planning responsibilities and to a lesser extent the response activities of governmental organizations. However the plan did not indicate the roles and responsibilities of government organizations for the disaster recovery period.[175] Similarly, the responsibilities of various NGOs and other service organizations were only specified for the emergency period but not for recovery. Concerning construction, the Caribbean Uniform Building Code was in place, but Montserrat’s chief building

170Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers, *Decolonising the Caribbean*, 23.
171Ibidem, 23.
172Ibidem, 25.
173Ibidem, 27.
174Robert Aldrich and John Connell, *The Last Colonies*, 31.
175Philip R. Berke and Timothy Beatley, *After the Hurricane, Linking Recovery to Sustainable Development in the Caribbean* (London 1997) 83.

inspector indicated during an interview that the natural hazards provisions in the code were almost nonexistent.[176] He added that even the limited provisions were rarely followed due to a shortage of trained building staff. In addition, land use control, which would direct construction away from hazardous areas had not been adopted by the Montserrat government. In addition, government personnel, who were assigned to carry out disaster recovery programs were not trained before Hugo and were inadequate in terms of numbers.[177] The unpreparedness of Montserrat can partially be explained by the fact that it had been more than sixty years since a hurricane had struck. One inhabitant noted: "there was no sensitivity or realism of the nature of the problem before Hugo. Because a lack of experience, we were not able to convince people of what they should do."[178]

Impact

Hugo struck on September 17, 1989. The tiny British dependency was devastated by the hurricane. A journalist on the island reported that six people were dead, five missing and local authorities stated that almost the entire population of 12 thousand had become homeless due to the storm.[179] An American disaster assistance adviser, after flying over Montserrat after Hugo, stated: "I don't recall seeing a single building still standing (...) I've been doing hurricane relief work for 28 years and this is as bad as any I've seen." The hospital, police stations, schools, churches, hotels and villa properties had been wrecked. Thousands of trees were destroyed and debris covered the roads, rendering them impassable. Utility poles were slammed to the ground throughout the island. The dock and port facilities were lost due to the storm. Almost all public buildings suffered damage. The tourist industry lost 80 percent of its hotel rooms. In addition, the island was without power, telephones, radio or fresh water, and had only 24 hours of food left. There were also some reports of looting among the chaos.

An early reconnaissance trip by a helicopter from a British warship, HMS Alacrity, which was assisting in the area at the request of the United Nations, revealed that 80 percent of the buildings had been damaged, according to Commander Colin Ferbrache.[180] Later reports estimated 98 percent of homes affected of which 50 percent suffered severe damage and 20 percent were totally destroyed.[181] Reports also confirmed that eleven people died during the impact of Hugo, most of the victims were elderly residents. The number of casualties, however, was remarkably small, compared to the catastrophic damage to property. In addition, Hugo was a vicious but relatively dry storm. Therefore, low-lying areas were spared from flooding and no bridges were lost.

Short- and long-term relief effort.

A landing party from the British ship Alacrity delivered basic medical supplies as soon as the storm subsided and helped to clear the rubble from the runway so that relief aircrafts could get in. The island made a desperate appeal for food, drinking water, tents and medicine. Already on the 19th did the British government offer £. one million in emergency aid to islands devastated by the hurricane (Hugo had hit multiple British territories).[182] A British airlift started to take supplies to the Caribbean and to

176Ibidem, 84.
177Ibidem, 113.
178Ibidem, 85.
179The Times (London), September 19, 1989.
180Ibidem.
181Philip R. Berke, *After the Hurricane*, 89.
182The Times (London), September 20, 1989.

bring out hundreds of stranded tourists. The delivery included thirty-seven tons of cargo, including water purification tablets, blankets, tents and food, which were loaded on to a Red Cross flight from Stansted airport, headed for Montserrat via Antigua.[183]

Debris had be to removed, however, there were not enough dump sites. Debris was dumped into gullies, even before the storm, this resulted in the lowering of the capacity of these gullies to allow storm water to runoff. Within a week the main roads were passable again. Since the dock was completely destroyed, all emergency supplies had to brought in by plane. Only after a delay of about 20 days, there arrived a make-shift dock, consisting of a flat-bottom barge with a mounted crane. The lack of docking facilities resulted in major difficulties considering the distribution; some aid was not unloaded and these ships had to leave and come back later. This resulted in a severe shortage of building materials for about seven months after the disaster.[184] Some ships carried perishable items which rotted away in the ships. In some areas, water was rationed and was available for only two or three hours a day. The restoration of electrical power took five months; it took until February 1990 to connect the last areas of the island to the grid again. The phone services were not restored until July 1990, ten months after Hugo.[185]

After three weeks, the government started its house to house damage assessment. By about two months after Hugo, all major recovery aid donor organizations started their own, separate damage assessments. A lot of homes were thus surveyed several times, causing much frustration with the residents and fueling rumors that aid materials were sold back on the black market by corrupt government officials. One of the reasons the restoration of damaged houses took a long time was the uncoordinated damage assessments combined with the fact that government assessments were not available for eleven months, thus many households did not receive aid for months. Another cause was the sheer scale of destruction. In a short time it became apparent that 100 percent of government buildings had received damage, except for the police station. Skilled labor and building materials were in short supply, and these were often siphoned off to rebuild the second homes of wealthy foreigners.[186] In July 1990, ten months after Hugo the government officials stated that many public facilities, like schools, had not yet been restored. In addition, about 90 percent of upper-class homes were rebuilt, but, in contrast, more than 40 percent of low income households (about nine hundred households) had not received recovery assistance.[187] In addition, most upper-income households, or those with relatives or friends overseas who sent them money, bought all the available materials. This fact, combined with the minimal docking facilities during the first weeks after Hugo, caused increasing prices for labor and materials to three or four times predisaster levels.[188] These facts caused slow recovery for low-income households. Eight months after Hugo struck a collaborative housing program, involving various NGOs, began. In many instances, damaged structures could have been reconstructed to be safer from future storms, but a “just put it back”-approach dominated. This program ensured in delivering housing aid and in strengthening the organizational capacity of villages to undertake development work beyond the recovery process.

The effectiveness of the National Disaster plan was low. The plan focused primarily on the predisaster period, and gave minimal attention to recovery and the immediate post hurricane emergency period. According to one observant there was effectively no plan for after the storm, so that everything

183Ibidem, September 22, 1989.
184Philip R. Berke, *After the Hurricane*, 110.
185Ibidem, 92.
186Ibidem, 93.
187Ibidem, 93.
188Ibidem, 110.

that was done after the hurricane struck, was an organizational nightmare.[189] The plans of government agencies and ministries tended to have similar defects; one example is the clearing of the debris. Although immediately after the storm, most main roads and the airport were cleared and operational, the long-term debris removal and disposal was slow. This was mainly due to a lack of dump sites. The government also failed in coordinating the numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations which were involved in disaster recovery. For instance, the national disaster coordinator failed to have a visible leading role during recovery. This was caused by a lack of the annual budget for disaster planning, which only consisted US$ 1,825 per annum.[190]

The bad state of disaster-planning can for a large part be contributed to a general absence of disasters on the island prior to Hugo. For over sixty years no serious hazard or disaster had occurred on the island. Resulting in a lack of disaster planning, mitigation or awareness among the population.

NGO activity was not incorporated into any disaster plan, thus their activities were mainly on an ad hoc basis. They mainly contributed in housing(recovery) projects. Prior to the storm a national building code was in place, however, it lacked storm mitigation standards. After Hugo several housing reconstruction workshops were held by NGOs to inform the public about mitigation and repair techniques.[191] In addition, the US peace corps build prefabricated houses after the storm. The Corps had, however, hardly any contact or feedback from the disaster-stricken people. Thus, these houses were considered unsatisfactory by most residents.

There were many difficulties between the government and the NGOs. Since neither had made plans before the storm is was unclear to all parties who led the recovery and who should engage in the different recovery activities, which were required after Hugo had struck. There was no overarching coordinating committee to oversee the housing recovery programs. The NGOs felt that the government did not possess the experience in disaster recovery needed to lead the recovery effort. One foreign NGO director even revealed that he had passed over offers of the government to collaborate.[192] The NGOs did not want to risk working with the inexperienced government, because of the large number of people in need of aid.

The Pan Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention project was instrumental in raising awareness about hurricane disasters, before Hugo. The governor provided leadership in identifying and coordinating the roles of various government agencies. He had acquired disaster experience as a public servant in the South pacific. According to one governmental official the governor actually ran the country for a month after the storm. The governor also established the Development Unit, which was the leading authority in coordinating the acquisition of international aid.[193] It established a useful network for acquiring, disaster recovery funds, materials and personnel.

Other improvements included the refurbishment or replacement of schools and aboveground electricity utility lines were replaced with lower-maintenance and more storm-resistant underground lines. But in general, the disaster was not viewed an an opportunity to reduce the future vulnerability of Montserrat to coastal storms.[194] Concerning long range recovery after Hugo, most notably the national disaster coordinator held a series of regular workshops to review and evaluate disaster recovery. The disaster plan was also revised and the plan has been updated. However, the government only made a marginal increase in the budget for disaster planning. Post Hugo disaster planning was waning as the Hugo experience faded into the past. In addition, disaster planning kept a focus on emergency

189Ibidem, 95.
190Ibidem, 96,
191Ibidem, 105.
192Ibidem, 107.
193Ibidem, 108.
194Ibidem, 115.

preparedness instead of disaster recovery. Montserrat which was once called 'the Emerald Island of the Caribbean', was now severely scarred by Hugo.

3.2 Saint Kitts and Nevis

3.2.1 Constitutional status

After a troublesome start in 1967 as a tripartite Associated State with Anguilla, St. Kitts-Nevis gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1983. In 1980, Anguilla seceded from St. Kitts-Nevis, to become a British Dependent Territory. St. Kitts-Nevis comprise a loosely knit federation. The parliament is located in the capital city of Basseterre in St. Kitts. Nevisians refer to Charlestown as the capital of Nevis. St Kitts and Nevis operate with considerable independence, as each island has its own executive and administrative branches.[195] St Kitts has a prime-minister and Nevis has a premier. Each head of state serves with a cabinet of ministers and associated ministries. In 1990 St. Kitts had a population of 36.000 and Nevis of 9000.[196]

The islands were struck by severe hurricanes, in the post-war era, 1989 (Hugo), 1995 (Luis), 1998 (Georges) and 1999 (Jose). If we again use EM-DAT to inventory these hurricanes we get the following results:

	Damage US $ (,000)	Total affected	Deaths	Homeless
1989 (Hugo)	46000	1300	1	1300
1995 (Luis)	197000	1800	0	0
1998 (Georges)	400000	10000	5	0
1999 (Jose)	41400	1180	0	100
Total	684400	14280	6	1400

Table 5.1 Damage caused by hurricanes on St. Kitts-Nevis according to EM-DAT[197]

Total affected is the sum of people who required immediate assistance during a disaster, like people who were injured, displaced or became homeless.

3.2.2 Hurricane Hugo

Prestorm conditions

The St. Kitts and Nevis national Disaster Preparedness and prevention Committee was the lead disaster planning organization in the Federation of St. Kitts-Nevis in 1989.[198] The primary responsibilities of the Committee were to carry out the St. Kitts and Nevis National Disaster Plan and to mobilize and coordinate domestic and international disaster response actions. The committee however, provided only limited coordination between St. Kitts and Nevis; the latter had its own disaster plan and a separate organizational arrangement for carrying it out. The year before Hugo, the St. Kitts

195Philip R. Berke, *After the Hurricane,* 117.
196Ibidem.
197Www.emdat.be
198Philip R. Berke, *After the Hurricane*, 119.

Disaster Planning Committee did carry out a national disaster awareness campaign. Nevis did not have any such predisaster planning efforts. Considering the fact that St. Kitts and Nevis had not experienced any major hurricane since 1928, there was a general lack of preparedness, since people found it hard to imagine that such a catastrophe would come about. Similar to Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis had limited controls over construction. There was a building code in place, but enforcement tended to be lax. Before hurricane Hugo, the capacity for undertaking disaster planning and mitigation was limited on St. Kitts and almost nonexistent on Nevis.[199]

Impact of Hugo

Hugo hit St Kitts-Nevis in the early morning of September 17, 1989, the first direct hit in sixty-one years. Although no loss of life was reported, the hurricane did damage houses, infrastructure, agriculture and tourism, with $US 46 million in damage and left 1300 people homeless. While Montserrat was the most severely damaged island in the Caribbean, Nevis and St Kitts were second and third.[200] On Nevis 65 percent of the houses were damaged.[201] A remarkable fact was that many traditional houses had withstood the storm, while some modern buildings were severely damaged. Crops on both islands sustained major damage. On St. Kitts, an estimated 12 percent of all homes were destroyed, with an additional 25 percent sustaining damage. The forests were also severely hit, causing extensive soil erosion, which affected the drinking water. Public buildings received a severe pounding. The main pier of Basseterre on St. Kitts was damaged, and the only pier on Nevis was damaged but remained in working condition. Severe beach erosion and damage to shoreline roadways was extensive on both islands. About 20 percent of all public buildings on the islands sustained structural damage.[202] The electricity, phone and water facilities were severely damaged. In addition, most hotels suffered substantial damage and were closed to guests for weeks. In response, crew members from the British Royal Fleet Auxiliary Brambleleaf provided emergency water and medical supplies.[203]

On Nevis, neither the disaster coordinator nor the premier of Nevis made any official declaration of an emergency when Hugo approached. There also was a lack of other local-level warning systems, like sirens or the ringing of bells. In fact, no organizational structure was in place to disseminate timely warnings efficiently nor to respond effectively to the threat posed by Hugo.[204] These factors may explain why many residents did not take the hurricane warning seriously and why over one third of the population did not take any preparedness measures to reduce damage. Yet some residents indicated they were aware of possible preparedness measures prior to the onset of the storm. [205]

Immediate relief effort

During the two week period after Hugo, debris from all major roadways was cleared, the homeless were temporarily sheltered and immediate food, medical, and water needs were met. Aerial damage assessments were made in days. The seaports and airports on both islands sustained only minor damage and were quickly restored in working order. Electricity was restored in two capitals within the

199Ibidem, 120.
200Ibidem.
201Alexis Hobson, 'The Responses of Residents of Nevis to Hurricane Threat: The Case of Hurricane Hugo' in: David Barker and Duncan McGregor, *Resources, Planning, and Environmental Management in a Changing Caribbean* (Kingston 2003) 157.
202Philip R. Berke, *After the Hurricane*, 120.
203The Times (London), September 20, 1989.
204Alexis Hobson, 'The Responses of Residents of Nevis to Hurricane Threat', 155.
205Ibidem, 159.

two week period.

Serious damage assessment was quickly underway. On St. Kitts, however, different assessment teams were unaware of each other's efforts, resulting in incomplete data which was difficult to compare. On Nevis, assessment teams were poorly staffed, and there was virtually no coordination among them.[206] The duration of immediate disaster relief was minimized on St. Kitts due to an effective Emergency Operations Center staff. Its efforts resulted in a well-organized working relationship between NGOs and government organizations in acquiring and distributing aid for rebuilding the damaged areas. On Nevis the immediate disaster relief effort took longer. This was due to fact that Nevis was more severely hit, thus in need of more materials and aid. Other factors included the lack of an operational Emergency Center or a workable disaster plan, which led to delay and poor coordination between NGOs and government organizations.[207]

Medium term recovery

The government of St. Kitts initiated a plan with the help from the UN to start reforestation, to counter soil erosion. Additionally, parliament increased the annual national disaster planning budget by tenfold, from $US 1,825 before Hugo to $US 18,250, in order to employ a full time disaster coordinator and to provide more support for disaster planning.[208] The rebuilding of major public structures and hotels incorporated structural strengthening measures. Concerning the disaster plans, the St. Kitts plan was prepared by private a consultant five months before Hugo, so there was minimal participation in plan preparation by individuals whose organizations would be involved in plan implementation. A St. Kittian official stated: "I was under the impression that the plan was only being prepared to satisfy some administrative rule of law, which requires that a plan be prepared. There was a plan all right, but one that could not be implemented."[209] The Nevis' plan was less confusing to read than the St. Kitts plan, however the Nevis plan was prepared by an outside consultant in 1985 with no involvement from Nevis officials. In fact, none of the four individuals who were members of the Nevis Emergency Organization had participated in plan operation.[210] Nor had they ever seen the plan. Also, the plan was not updated.

Damage assessment on Nevis was done on a totally ad hoc basis. At first there was even indecision whether the Nevis government should be involved in damage assessment, since people mostly relied on their kin and neighbors for help. There was also a sentiment that help would come from St. Kitts, since they had the facilities for receiving aid. In the end, the government rounded up whoever they could get to put the damage numbers down on paper, the government needed the numbers to get international assistance.[211]

While a number of NGOs were successful on St. Kitts, both in collaboration with government institutions and actual disaster relief, on Nevis most of the NGOs efforts were separated from government activities. In other words, collaboration between the Nevis government and the NGOs was non-existent. According to inhabitants, leadership provided by the Nevisian government was not effective. The omission of the national disaster coordinator was particularly noteworthy.[212] The organization between St. Kitts and Nevis themselves was limited during disaster recovery. Most

206Philip R. Berke, *After the Hurricane*, 126.
207Ibidem, 127.
208Ibidem, 127.
209Ibidem, 128.
210Ibidem, 128.
211Ibidem, 131.
212Ibidem, 133.

programs operated independently on both islands. This was mainly due to the fact that both islands had their own disaster plan, which did not include plans how coordination between the islands should be formed during an emergency. Historically, collaborative efforts had been limited, and long before Hugo there existed a sense of mistrust between the people of the two islands.[213] There was even an accusation of Nevis officials that St. Kitts kept an unfair portion of the recovery aid, this even lead to growing support in Nevis for secession. In short, all instances of linkage between recovery and development on St. Kitts and Nevis occurred on an ad hoc basis, due to the fact that in the disaster plans there was no mention of how these linkages, either between the governments and / or the NGOs, should be implemented during a disaster.[214]

The rebuilding of public and private structures often incorporated structural strengthening measures. The improved buildings included the electrical power plant on St. Kitts, schools, utility poles and reinforced seawalls. Replaced homes were in general structurally stronger, more aesthetically pleasing, cooler and more comfortable.[215] However, inadequate mitigation requirements in the national building code, on both islands, and inadequate workmanship by unqualified people constrained effective monitoring and enforcement. In fact, NGOs were generally more effective at monitoring the distribution of aid and in ensuring that aid recipients complied with guidelines, than any governmental organization. Although the demands on domestic organizations were extensive and in many instances exceeded their capabilities, St. Kitts and Nevis organizations were not nearly as overwhelmed in dealing with foreign disaster relief organizations as those on Montserrat.[216]

In the general, the governments on both islands had insufficient staffing in terms of number of positions and expertise. The staffing of local NGOs was better and plans have been made to integrate these NGOs into ongoing emergency preparedness and response activities. Building supplies on St. Kitts and Nevis met most of the needs for reconstruction. Compared to Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis had smaller portions of their housing stock damaged, which minimized heavy reliance on foreign aid. Thus unlike Montserrat's high level of dependency on foreign aid, recovery on St. Kitts and Nevis was not substantially constrained by time and effort spent seeking such aid.[217]

Long term recovery; hurricanes Luis, Georges and Jose

Three significant hurricanes hit St. Kitts-Nevis after Hugo; hurricane Luis in 1995, hurricane Georges in 1998 and hurricane Jose in 1999. These storms were less destructive for the islands. It appears that the residents of these islands were much better prepared than before Hugo. Only hurricane Georges caused significant damage. On St. Kitts, 85 percent of the housing stock was severely damaged, while an estimated 35 percent of the housing stock on Nevis sustained minor damage, mainly roofing.[218]

In general, people were better alerted to the arrival of the hurricanes, and higher levels of preparedness were reported by the disaster coordinator on Nevis. Two factors could have attributed to the increased preparedness. First, a disaster coordinator was appointed in 1993, who was responsible for the dissemination of hurricane warnings.[219] Second, prior to hurricane Hugo in 1989, 61 years had passed since a hurricane had affected the islands. Thus, people were ill prepared for such an event. In

213Ibidem, 135.
214Ibidem, 138.
215Ibidem, 141.
216Ibidem, 145.
217Ibidem, 146.
218Alexis Hobson, 'The Responses of Residents of Nevis to Hurricane Threat', 167.
219Ibidem, 168.

the years that followed, people became aware of the danger and created a disaster-management culture on the two islands.

Conclusion

The aim for this paper is to compare small-island entities in the Lesser Antilles, and to determine how their different constitutional constellations have affected disaster-management since the post-war period. Secondly, the aim is to find out if disasters have affected the constitutional constellations of these same islands. This aim asks for two questions. First, how did the constitutional status influence disaster-management on each entity? Second, did a disaster, or a number of disasters cause constitutional change between an entity and its (former) metropole? These two questions will be answered consecutively in this conclusion.

Constitutional status and disaster-management

It appears that, the closer the ties are with the metropole, the better disaster-management is conducted. When hurricane Luis hit the French part of Saint Martin, the response of the French authorities was comparable to if a similar disaster would have hit a French city like Marseilles. This makes sense, since Saint Martin was an integral part of the French state. Prior to the storm, construction on the island was in general disaster-proof. Although some buildings sustained damage, it mostly concerned blown-off roofs and not completely destroyed buildings. The roads were in good order, which was very useful during recovery. Debris was cleared with relative ease and made adequate distribution of aid possible. A purpose built response unit, the *Sécurité civile*, was sent over immediately to the nearby island of Martinique, as soon as it became clear that Luis would hit St. Marin. This unit was deployed and active on Saint Martin as soon as the airport was reopened. The state of emergency was declared on the island, which prohibited excessive looting. Next, around 3000 soldiers and supporting personnel were sent over during the medium-term recovery period. This vast deployment of man-power ensured safety and a fast and adequate recovery procedure. It however also made a rigid response with regard to the illegal immigrants possible. In response to the chaotic situation of these immigrants on the 'Dutch' side, the French were able to act with great effectiveness. As soon as the French authorities were afraid of a 'Dutch' exodus of illegal immigrants, they responded by checking the border and thus ensuring that the illegal immigrants would stay on the Dutch side. Furthermore, the French were able to prohibit the illegal immigrants from rebuilding the slums and proved to be more efficient at housing illegal immigrants in camps and subsequent arrangements to provide them with air flights to their place of origin. Funding of the recovery process was for a large part provided by the French state. Aid from the the central government in France was not a point of debate, since St. Martin was regarded as an integral part of the French Republic, and could therefore count on adequate support. As mentioned, another part or city, like Marseilles, in France would also have received aid from the central government if a similar disaster had struck the French mainland.

If we now compare the French with the 'Dutch' constellation, we can assess that the Kingdom of the Netherlands was entangled in a crisis of authority, with dire effects on the immediate recovery process. As was stated in the Charter of Kingdom, the Kingdom-partners should accord each other with assistance in a case of emergency. Although aid was provided by the Netherlands, and even by Suriname when they were a part of the Kingdom, the immediate response was minimal, medium-term response was adequate, but, the long-term recovery effort was provided, with a list of demands from the benefactor. Before Hugo, the Dutch government relied mainly on charities in case of disasters, and was reluctant to provide serious aid or disaster-management. By the time Hugo hit, due to the considerable damage, the Dutch were almost forced to lend assistance. Help was provided, but the funds which were made available, were in fact already destined for the Netherlands Antilles. In effect

the funds consisted of previously reserved development aid, made available sooner for the recovery process after Hugo. Hurricane Luis proved to be the most destructive nature-induced disaster that hit St. Maarten in history. The excessive damage-recovery costs in addition to a growing deficit of Netherlands Antilles' budget, urged the Dutch government to respond and to make additional funds available. However, getting these additional funds where they were needed the most proved to be difficult.

The autonomous state of the Netherlands Antilles combined with its budget deficit and the financial supervision that was in place on St. Maarten, complicated the Dutch aid effort. As stated, the Dutch were willing to provide aid, but wanted to provide this to St. Maarten only in parts and through specific projects. The Dutch government was afraid that the aid would otherwise go into the wrong pockets, because there was much corruption on the island. Minister Voorhoeve of Antillean affairs further complicated matters for the Antilleans by granting the gezaghebber, Mr. Richardson, of St. Maarten with additional authority with regard to the recovery process and the distribution of aid. The Netherlands Antilles and the democratic process on St. Maarten were effectively bypassed by the Dutch government. The additional authority Richardson received, which effectively made him the supreme leader of the island, led to opposition in the Netherlands Antilles. A compromise was reached, which granted the executive council and the island council of St. Maarten some power, but only after decisions had been made. The matter of fact was that the Netherlands Antilles needed the Dutch aid, and had to accept the Dutch demands. The growing deficit of the Netherlands Antilles and some of the islands left them unable to provide in the voluminous sum needed to adequately aid St. Maarten and to make sure that the coming tourist season would not be lost. Loss of extra revenue generated by tourism would have added to the financial misery.

On Montserrat, the situation was again a bit worse than on St Maarten. After hurricane Hugo hit, immediate help was provided by the UK. Funds were made available and UK military personnel aided the stuck island. They mainly restricted themselves to short term, direct recovery work. Medium- and long-term recovery came from multiple sources, but not from the UK. Furthermore, a badly functioning state apparatus hampered long term recovery. The small and understaffed government of the 'Emerald island' had difficulties controlling the aid, which was in need of centralization. Multiple assessments of the damage led to administrative chaos and no, or inadequate aid for the needy. Corruption led to the loss of building materials and some aid was found to be unsatisfactory, like the housing which was provided by the US peace corps. The inability of the government of Montserrat to cope with the aftermath of hurricane Hugo can be attributed to two main causes. The first was the absence of any experience with hurricanes. Hurricanes had not hit Montserrat since decades, and therefore hardly any predisaster preparations had been made. The second reason is the lack of funds. Montserrat was relatively poor and had a loose relationship with the UK. The UK tended to neglect its Caribbean dependencies. Hurricane Hugo and other disasters forced the UK, to some degree, to review its relationship with its dependencies. Which will be the topic of the next section of this conclusion.

Like on Montserrat, hurricane Hugo was the first significant hurricane to hit St. Kitts-Nevis in decades. The independent federation did receive some direct aid from its former colonizer. A British Royal Navy ship provided aid. Although damage was considerable, the damage to the housing stock was significantly less in comparison to Montserrat. Thus much less time was spent in search of foreign aid. Like Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis had to rely primarily on foreign aid. NGOs proved to be more able than government institutions on both islands, since the governments lacked staff, both in number and in experience. Like on Montserrat, damage assessment was done by numerous organizations which led to chaotic aid distribution. Nevis was more heavily damaged than St. Kitts and the Nevisian disaster plan proved to inadequate, which led to poor coordination of the relief effort. There was also little cooperation between the two islands, which increased the already present mistrust between the two

federation members. In general, the independent status of St. Kitts-Nevis caused that the country had to rely on itself and on foreign aid to deal with the recovery after Hugo. Damage was not as severe as on Montserrat, and the disaster led to an increase in disaster-awareness on the island and subsequent improvements in overall disaster-management on the islands, although federal cooperation did not increase.

Thus, in short, it becomes clear that the relationship with the former colonizer had great impact on the size and effectiveness of disaster-management. While French St Martin could count on a sizable and specialized disaster relief team as well as funds for recovery, the other islands faced more difficulties. Dutch St Maarten did receive aid, but more limited than than the French and with more heavy consequences (control of government). Montserrat could in fact only count on direct relief aid while St Kitts and Nevis were even more left on their own.

The influence of disasters on the constitutional relationship

Let us now ask if disasters have influenced the constitutional status of these islands. A single nature-induced disaster may not cause constitutional change on its own. However, it can work as a catalyst with regard to constitutional change. The aftermath of nature-induced disasters can initiate or intensify already present discussions about the constitutional relationship between an island and its metropole. Where the constitutional constellation is clear and tends to be accepted, like incorporated Saint Martin or the independent St. Kitts-Nevis, nature-induced disasters do not seem to initiate discussions about constitutional change. However, where the situation is unclear, nature-induced disasters can lead to change.

On 'Dutch' St. Maarten, discussions about the constitutional relationship where already underway by the time hurricane Luis hit the island in 1995. During the 1990s, subsequent Dutch governments changed the course of their stance towards the Kingdom. Prior to the 1990s, the aim was to turn the Netherlands Antilles into a completely sovereign state. Thereafter, the focus shifted to good governance. The Netherlands Antilles turned out to be a money pit and, next to structural budget deficits, consecutive hurricanes from 1989 through the 1990s, with Luis as the most destructive, increased the demand for funds by the Netherlands Antilles. Because of this, the Netherlands wanted increasing control over their funds, which led to increasing demands from the Dutch toward the Antilleans. The manner in which aid was provided during the aftermath of Luis is an excellent example of this. In this case, the Netherlands Antilles and the democratic process on St. Maarten were effectively bypassed by the Netherlands. Power was granted by the Dutch to the gezaghebber and supervision was granted to the governor of the Antilles, whom were both non-elected officials, but appointed by the Crown.

I do not want to state here that hurricanes led to the dismantlement of the Netherlands Antilles and the strict financial supervision which is now in place on St. Maarten. However, hurricanes do act as catalysts on already existing tendencies. The discussions on the status of the Dutch Antilles arose because these small-island entities became the victim of a whole range of weaknesses. The dismantlement of the Netherlands Antilles in 2010 did lead to a *status aparte* of St. Maarten and to a more independent position *de jure*, but effectively the Netherlands had the better position during negotiations. When it came to the dismantlement, the Netherlands agreed to pay a voluminous and significant part of the Netherlands Antilles' debt. but in doing so, they could make demands. One of the demands was control over the financial affairs of St. Maarten. In fact, St. Maarten was presented with a *fait accompli*. The ever present weaknesses of a small-island entity proved to be unbearable for the Netherlands Antilles as a whole, and St. Maarten in particular, especially since nature-induced disasters have increased since 1989, both in severity and frequency. If St. Maarten wanted to keep receiving aid,

they had to adhere to the Dutch demands. Indeed, other hurricanes have hit St. Maarten since Luis. It is imaginable that several, severe hurricanes will hit the island consecutively in a short period of time. In such circumstances it is very useful to have a rich and benevolent benefactor nearby. Maybe the time has come to start the discussion about a Delta-plan for St. Maarten. This should of course be done with the approval of, or even in collaboration with, the French.

The case of St. Maarten is comparable to that of Montserrat. By the 1990s, the period of 'benign neglect' with regard to their West-Indian dependencies and the aim of the UK to rid themselves of their former 'darlings of empire', seems to have passed. Hurricane Hugo and the subsequent destructive eruptions of Mount Soufriere in 1995 on Montserrat, which rendered 75 percent of the island uninhabitable and which destroyed most towns on the island, also seem to have worked as a catalyst, or even an initiator with regard to the discussion about the constitutional relationship. The consecutive nature-induced disasters which hit Montserrat asked for voluminous funds from the UK. The UK did not want to walk away from its responsibilities during the aftermath of the eruption of the volcano. Rather the UK wanted to be seen as a responsible state, which took care of its dependencies. Although the ties between the UK and its dependencies were unclear with regard to disaster-relief, and the ties in general tended to be loose and distant, by the end of 1990s this had changed. The constitutional status between the UK and Montserrat was formalized. Montserratians were allowed to move to the UK, a right which they lacked before. No more attempts were made to create new federations with the different British entities in the Caribbean. In addition, no more attempts were made to force independence upon the islands. In return for Britain's willingness to respect the wish of the islands to continue under British sovereignty, the newly formed Overseas Territories did have to adhere to certain obligations, which included the observance of human rights, law and order and good governance.

St. Kitts-Nevis did not engage in any attempt to change their constitutional status after hurricane Hugo. In general, St. Kitts-Nevis proved that they could take care of themselves. Maybe disasters in the future will change this stance/situation. In the end, the four major hurricanes which struck St. Kitts-Nevis during the period 1989-1999, did cause damage with a total worth of US$ 684 million. For such a small entity that is a large sum to collect in foreign aid. It is however noteworthy that here too, disasters caused discussions on the constitutional status: in this case the unclear relationship between the two islands Kitts and Nevis. The aftermath of hurricane Hugo intensified tensions between the two islands. Accusations about unfair aid-distribution and a mutual unwillingness to cooperate with regard to disaster-management, show that this remnant of the British federal experiment in the Caribbean may need constitutional revision amongst itself. Thus, hurricanes may also initiate or act as a catalyst between St. Kitts and Nevis too.

The annual hurricane seasons in the Caribbean have been increasing in severity during the past two decades. Whether this increase is attributed to global warming or not, the fact is that adequate disaster-management is needed throughout the region. All construction should be hurricane-proof. The almost insurmountable costs can only be provided if cooperation among the Caribbean islands is increased. The exchange of knowledge and even funds is needed to create a more safe and sustainable Caribbean.

Bibliography

Books

Anderson, Mark D. *Disaster Writing, The Cultural Politics of Catastrophe in Latin America* (Virginia 2011),

Aldrich, Robert. & Connell, John. *The Last Colonies* (Cambridge 1998),

Baldacchino, G. & Milne, D. *The Case for Non-Sovereignty, lessons from sub-national island jurisdictions* (London 2009),

Berke, P. R. & Beatley, T. *After the Hurricane, Linking Recovery to Sustainable Development in the Caribbean* (London, 1997),

Davis, Mike. *Late Victorian Holocausts, El Nino Famines and the making of the Third World* (London, 2001),

Fritz, Charles, E. 'Disaster' in: Robert K. Merton & Robert A. Nisbet, *Contemporary Social Problems, An Introduction to the Sociology of Deviant Behavior and Social Disorganization* (New York 1961),

Garcia-Acosta, Virginia. 'Historical Disaster Research' in: Susanne M. Hoffman & Anthony Oliver-Smith, *Catastrophe and Culture, The Anthropology of Disaster* (Santa Fe 2002)

Hobson, Alexis. 'The Responses of Residents of Nevis to Hurricane Threat: The Case of Hurricane Hugo' in: David Barker & Duncan McGregor, *Resources, Planning, and Environmental Management in a Changing Caribbean* (Kingston 2003)

Hillebrink, S. *Political Decolonization and Self-Determination, The Case of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba* (Zutphen 2007),

Mauch, Christian. 'Introduction' in: Christof Mauch & Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses* (Lanham, 2009),

Oostindie, G. & Klinkers, I. *Decolonising the Caribbean, Dutch Policies in a Comparative Perspective* (Amsterdam 2003) ,

Oostindie, G. & Klinkers, I. *Knellende Koninkrijksbanden, Het Nederlandse dekolonisatiebeleid in de Caraïben, 1940-2000 [deel III]*(Amsterdam 2001),

Pfister, Christian. 'Learning from Nature-induced Disasters: Theoretical Considerations and Case Studies from Western Europe' in: Christof Mauch & Christian Pfister, *Natural Disasters, Cultural Responses, Case Studies Towards a Global Environmental History* (Lanham, 2009),

Newspapers

At www.kb.nl:
Amigoe di Curacao: Weekblad voor de Curaçaosche eilanden,
Nieuw Suriname: Surinaams nieuws- en advertentieblad,
Nieuwsblad van het Noorden,
London Times,
Sud-Ouest,

At the KITLV:
KabNA-knipselkrant (Collected newspaper articles of the Cabinet of Aruban and Netherlands Antillean affairs) Researched volumes; 1989; 1995; 1996.

Websites

www.emdat.be

Map of the path of hurricane Hugo:
http://www.unesco.org/csi/act/cosalc/hur8.htm

Statuut van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands):
http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002154/geldigheidsdatum_02-05-2012

Multiple web pages on:
www.statengeneraal.nl

www.overheid.nl