BACHELOR THESIS

'TIS SO POLITICS HERE DOES GO':

A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON HOW CITIZENS PERCEIVE IF THE SMALL STATE POLITICS OF SINT MAARTEN ALIGNS WITH GOOD GOVERNANCE

Author:
Danielle Philipps
S1806645

Program:
Bachelor of Communication Science

Faculty
Behavioral, Management and Social Science

Thesis supervisor:
Dr. M. van Vuuren

June 26th, 2020

Preface

Dear Reader,

I can hardly believe that my bachelor's thesis is now coming to an end; the end of a very challenging period. Six months ago, I was still unsure of my own capabilities to execute such a project. Fast forward to now, putting finishing touches on my thesis and with it putting an end to my period as a BSc Communication Science student. Writing this thesis has, as we know, been a difficult ride; especially in the periods when the thesis was still and , the burden weighed heavy. Despite my rather cavalier initial approach to this is research claiming that 'especially no life's work', it really started to look like that mid-process! And I could not have bridged this last period, which I feel has gained momentum, without the support of many! I would like to thank all the people who have continued to encourage me in the past half year.,

First and foremost, I would like to thank my closests friend and second reader, Moesje for essentially making this thesis possible. Her support during this process by sharing wise substantive comments and when due, a providing place to vent about my anxieties helped me to get out of several spirals of feeling unable to do this research. In addition, I would also like to thank my other friend and LLM graduate, Lashonda for the useful advice and words of encouragement as she knew how stressful this process can get.

Secondly, I would like to thank my honors project supervisor dr. Lara Carminati. I would probably still be conducting my data analysis if I didn't have her (voluntary) feedback and suggested articles. Her involvement during this process has helped and motivated me enormously to execute my research and apply my findings to my final project for honors track 'Processes of Change' .

Above all, I would like to express great gratitude to my thesis supervisor, dr. Mark van Vuuren. It is a miracle that he has been so patient to provide me with advice and direction every time, after very long periods of getting lost in the vast body of my data (which became more and more frequent due to me trying to include everything I found interesting). I have had a questionable look so many times during our feedback moments and I want to thank him for taking the (extra) time to explain it to me every time, and not leaving until I fully grasped it.

With this thesis I complete my bachelor's in communication science. I have learned a lot here and feel much more confident about my own knowledge and skills and am prepared to offer insight through my 'communicative lenses'. This is what I take into the next era that has almost arrived: obtaining my Master of Science.

I wish you a lot of reading pleasure.

Daniëlle Philipps
Enschede, June 26, 2020

Abstract

Sint Maarten has experienced a democratic backslid caused by the constant restructuring of parliament within the last decade. Previous research on developing democracies place the concept 'Good governance' high the agenda since it is seen as one of the main prerequisites to determining that a country is fit to receive aid. Further analysis of this concept led to it being asked: '*What are Sint Maarten citizens' main perceptions on the democratic adherence to political good governance within the small island state?*' In this context, good governance is defined as governing bodies who act in such a way to secure the integrity of the public administration, proper management of public funds and democratic monitoring of it, the fight against corruption, respect for human rights, the fight against poverty, the rule of law and the democratization of society.

Based on a review of literature, the perception on the political climate is investigated using a qualitative method of open-ended survey. The objective is to find out to how citizen perceive the small state politics of the island in regard to good governance. Analysis of results shows that the situation of Sint Maarten is not fully aligned with the principles of good governance. As a result, citizens have not perceived many improvements to the pre-2010 situation when taking the principles of good governance and the municipal model. More specifically, participants have reported a misalignment between the current state of politics and of the four principles of good governance.

Key words: good governance, small island states, Sint Maarten, democratic development

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The emergence of democracy is one of the most defining characteristics of the 20th century. The range of tasks of the government today is sizeable compared to previous centuries, therefore, it is also the domain on which political decisions must be made. Nonetheless, many states and citizens follow democratic rules, which is unmatched in world history. Democracy is often regarded as the most effective way of preventing the government from abusing its powers and serving only the self-interest of the rulers at the expense of the general public. This mechanism ensures the interests of the government coincide with those of the people.

In general, microstates and small-scale islands meet the requirements of a democracy. However, previous research shows that the smaller a society is, the more susceptible public welfare is to problems, such as political violations of integrity (Anckar, 2002; Veenendaal, 2013). Supporting this notion, upon nearing ten years since becoming independent, the small island state of Sint Maarten has experienced a democratic backslide caused by the constant restructuring of parliament. Although the islands' elections are typically carried out in a democratic fashion – for example, postulated candidates compete for office and active citizen participation (Higley & Best, 2009) – these elections have almost always led to the re-election of individuals who were previously in power.

An in-depth historical analysis by Roitman and Veenendaal (2016) focused on deducing the origins of oligarchism in small settings despite the democracy-stimulating tendencies of smallness that are highlighted in the academic literature. Given that the island has not known a stable government sitting since declaring independence in 2010, an urgency to analyze this situation became apparent. Upon further analysis of the study by Roitman and Veenendaal (2016), one key aspect that was not included is the extent to which the political situation is in line with the concept of 'good governance'.

'Good governance' is placed high on the agenda in a national development policy. Herfkens' new course was in line with international changes. It is increasingly suggested that understanding and abiding to this can lead to an improvement in the political situation. Burnside and Dollar (1997) reveals that in countries where there is an absence of good governance, and good social and economic policies are not pursued and, as a result aid flows have a weaker effect. Since then, the presence of good governance as a condition for an effective development policy has been widely valued at international level. As far as it was concerned, social aid had to be more effective, and to this end it had to be concentrated on a limited number of countries. Therefore, a major criterion for choice of recipient countries was based on the principle of 'good governance'. In the foreign policy of global governance, the promotion of respect for the rule of law and human rights has traditionally played an important role. However, the studies underlying the World Bank's policy orientation focused on those institutions that are important for good economic policy.

§1.2   *Problem analysis and research question(s)*

As it currently stands, there is not a clear overview of whether or not the political situation embodies good governance. From a communicative perspective, it is best to analyze the social dialogue to truly gain insight into matters of public interest. Also, citizens of Sint Maarten deserve an opportunity to give their candid viewpoints on the islands' political climate in a scientific setting that allows anonymity. More precisely, since Sint Maarten is a democracy, residents are an active part of political decision-making and are, therefore, essentially the key to any major changes that are to happen as their decisions actively form their collective futures. As a result, the objective of this research is to compile this information and eventually present these findings to nationals, thus potentially inspiring change to secure an unflawed democracy.

In support of this research aim, Anckar (2002) and Srebrnik (2004) consider small islands to be places filled with democracy and democratic procedures. They tend to be relatively harmonized, creating a high degree of sympathetic identification among inhabitants and "a greater effort to feel others out" (Srebrnik, 2004). Srebrnik (2004, p.332) states that citizens of small island states have greater opportunity to participate in choosing their leaders and in decision-making; there are fewer layers of the administrative system, and "open channels of communication exist between those who govern and those who are governed […]". The motive behind researching this topic is the upcoming tenth anniversary of the constitutional transformation of the islands in the Caribbean Netherlands on October 10, 2010. Sint Maarten now operates as a non-sovereign territory within the kingdom of the Netherlands but has not yet had a sitting of parliament remain for the full term. So, the question arises of how the demos is affected by this implementation of the democratic electoral model, as has been the case for nine years. This has led to the main research question:

'What are Sint Maarten citizens' main perceptions on the adherence to political good governance within the small island state?'

To answer the central question, the citizens' views, opinions on the political climate and perceptions of how the current state of politics aligns with the principles of 'good governance' and whether the complete actions to adhere to this.

In this study, the perception on the political climate will be investigated using a qualitative method of an open-ended survey. This research method was chosen based on the advice of Boeije (2009) by using the flexibility of qualitative research to measure subtle activities that may have had major consequences. The objective is to find out how citizens perceive the small state politics of the island in regard to good governance.

§1.3 Research relevance

This research is socially relevant because it takes into consideration whether democracy within this small island state contributes to good governance. The question is whether the apparent level of governance complies with the characteristics of 'good governance', or whether citizens are re-elected due to other nefarious reasons. This should be evident by the end of this research. This is of value because other small islands can learn from the results of this research and begin to identify their origins of oligarchy. Thus, potentially benefitting the entire population on the Caribbean. The research is scientifically relevant as not much comparative research has yet been carried out into small island politics on Sint Maarten. Regarding the integrity of the parliament, research has been done regarding the ABC and BES islands of the Caribbean Netherlands which have generally been commissioned by the national government mostly pertain to the former. Investigations have been conducted specifically to address integrity issues and address them. For example, Camelia, Richards and, Bot (2015) published a report on the status of the integrity policy in the Caribbean Netherlands.

In addition, there is also a substantive social debate about the scope and purpose of public policy that focuses mainly on active participation in society. Few often participate, and many seldom do. It is important to think critically and with attention to the context about the concept of participation. In this way, a representation can be made of what the interpretation can mean in practice. The question at the heart of this thesis also focuses on the perception of people to which the policies directly apply. Moreover, as it currently stands, there is little to no available literature about the islands at the state of its politics since 2010, which means that this report contributes to the greater good of knowledge and academia. Also proving more scientific relevance of this research.

§1.4 Chapter overview

This research begins with a general introduction of the research topic followed by the statement of the main arguments for the overall relevance of this research (Chapter 1). The second chapter (Chapter 2) presents the theoretical framework of this research, which elaborates on the concept of 'good governance' in an attempt to establish what is meant according to the principles of good governance. This is followed by the 'Methodology and Data Collection' section (Chapter 3) in which the methods used to collect data are comprehensively described. Subsequentially, the results of this data collection are presented (Chapter 4) followed by a main conclusion and discussion based on the survey's responses (Chapter 5). This chapter concludes with presenting the limitations, practical implications, and suggestions for future research based on findings.

2. Theoretical Framework

A consensus emerged that the quality of a governance system is crucial for economic and social development. Despite Weiss' (2000) claim that the concept still lacks clear evidence, good governance has taken a prominent position in the development debate: For example, governance is central to the Millennium Development Goals, and it is an important condition for granting development funds. However, the overall principle of *'good governance'* raises interesting but also difficult questions. Why has good governance been promoted? Is it about the effectiveness towards fighting poverty? Or is it just serving international political relations given that the establishment of the administration is closely linked to the sovereignty of a state?

This research is based on citizens' perception of good governance within Sint Maarten; consequentially it is greatly relevant to elaborate on the concept of good governance and its relevance to an emerging small island state. This will then serve as the foundation in the Sint Maarten case study, to determine whether or not the current situation is in alignment. Therefore, the main focus of this literature review is to establish the criteria that is to be met to determine whether a country has good governance. This will be done by discussing the origin of good governance, followed with the conceptualization of the term. Thirdly, the main principles of good governance will be discussed followed by a discussion about insight acquired from this desk research.

§2.1   *The emergence of Good Governance*

In recent decades, the term *'good governance'* has boomed in global international relations. Firstly, '*bad governance' was* increasingly seen as one of the causes of anything that can go wrong in a society, such as legal uncertainty, corruption, human rights violations, economic monopolies, and unjust distribution of wealth. The emphasis on *good governance* represented a new political philosophy and approach to problems of development and democratization. There was previously little to no agreement on an adequate concept of *good governance*. However, a recent framework was developed by Keping (2017) revised the theory of government in mainstream politics and to establish agreement between global politicians, scholars, officials and entrepreneurs.

The increased importance attached to good governance stemmed from several developments. Firstly, after the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, international interference in the way states treat their citizens increased dramatically. Observers, for example, under the umbrellas of the United Nations, regularly ensured that elections were fair. New states were increasingly only recognized when they had democratically elected governments. The international community increasingly took sanctions against countries guilty of violating human rights.

Secondly, the disappearance of the East–West opposition in the 1990s encouraged the introduction of aspects of good governance such as the rule of law, democracy, and a reliable government more prominent in international relations. After the fall of communism, the eyes of the international Western community were focused on misrule of governments in their own camps, and these countries were appealed to on their democratic merits (Margulis et al., 2013). The fall reinforced global trends that in turn influenced developments in national governance. Parts of the developing world increased significantly, making a certain level of administrative quality important to the business community in these new markets. The developing countries concerned found that this private capital contributed to their economic development, which increased the willingness to improve the quality of governance and policy (Weiss, 2000). The position of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank attributed weight to certain factors that determined the success of their loans to developing countries, such as rule of law, public sector effectiveness, and the fight against corruption.

Thirdly, globalization meant that international treaties became necessary in various areas. For example, areas such as combating crime, promoting international economic movement, and protecting the environment, called for enhanced global cooperation. Weiss (2000) argues that this cooperation makes it possible to assume that the countries concerned also had a public administration that complied with international obligations. In fact, good governance became a prerequisite for proper international cooperation.

Lastly, another development stemmed from the economic crises in Western welfare states of the 1980s. This led to a review of the government's position in society. Supported by neoliberalism, the role of government was reduced. At the beginning of the 1990s, however, the new status of the government meant a reorientation of the policy. The movement aimed at reshaping the government and focused on the effectiveness of government action. This also applied to the use of development funds. Not only had the role of the government changed, other actors also took a place in international relations. It was not only states that played a role in this context, but also transnational business which was given a louder voice . (Castells, 2008; Scholte, 2002, 2019) A global *civil society* was also developed, to which many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and numerous international institutions belonged (Scholte, 2019). Some of these organizations lobbied the national authorities for the importance of good governance. This transnational *civil society* was increasingly loud in each country and insisted that components of good governance, such as rule of law and human rights, remain on the international agenda.

§2.2   *Recent conceptualization of good governance*

Recent works show that political institutions (with small-scale government) can achieve economic and social growth. Hall and Benn (2003) (as cited by Minto-Coy & Berman, 2015) argue that effective governance in the Caribbean is important for social and economic development in the region. They argue that current power competition among political parties, much like those in the Caribbean, is destructive. Strong power competition also encourages political segmentation, with the result that parties focus more on short-term gains than long-term strategic development goals.

Within this mainstream view, good governance is often cited as a solution to the political, social, and economic problems in Sint Maarten. Despite its criticisms, Burnside and Dollar's (1997) recommendations prioritize strengthening the rule of law and the democratic content of governance, which, for example, now plays as a main criterion in the choice of countries with whom an assisted relationship is entered into. These recommendations defines the concept of *good governance*, to be, "*when then governing body acts in such a way to secure the integrity of the public administration, proper management of public funds and democratic monitoring of it, the fight against corruption, respect for human rights, the fight against poverty, the rule of law and the democratization of society.*"

The authors argue that *'good governance'* is therefore a multidimensional concept. However, they maintain that the importance of this concept is unmissable, as good governance results in a stable and predictable environment that would enable households and businesses to expand their productivity. This would increase incomes, reduce poverty, and increase the score of countries on social indicators such as literacy and infant mortality. For this reason, Sint Maarten will in the end benefit from a governance structure which is in accordance to the guidelines of good governance.

§2.3   *The principles of Good Governance*

As mentioned previously, where it was mainly a minimalist, economic view of governance, the concept of good governance is now rooted in public affairs based on participation, transparency, equality and responsibility, security, a proper state establishment and a good administration of justice for all; including

minorities. Good governance is thus a term that symbolizes the paradigm shift of the role of governments. While reviewing literature, it became apparent that authors struggle to come to a consensus on all characteristics which fall within the concept. However, there are four main aspects, which are consistently mentioned in one way or the other. These four main aspects central to the concept of good governance are: participatory-, lawful-, effective- and transparent governance.

Participatory Governance

The first aspect is related to democratization and empowerment. This includes a high degree of population participation in decision-making and specifically the participation of women, decentralization, strengthening parliamentary democracy, and support for civil society organizations and the free press. Moreover, 'Participatory Governance' could be understood as 'in dialogue with the population' without the necessary presence of formal structures of representation and decision-making procedures. Emerson, et al., (2011, p. 2) accordingly defines participatory governance as "the processes and structures of public policy decision-making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished." The authors argue that defining this aspect as such allows participatory governance to be used as a broader analytic construct in public administration and enables distinctions among different applications, classes, and scales (Emerson et al., 2011).

Lawful governance

The second aspect relates to whether actions carried out by those in power are 'in accordance with applicable law'. According to de los Reyes and Martin (2016) and Lake (2010), examples of these standards are legal certainty, separation of state powers, integrity of the elected officials, limitation of corruption, accountability in the management of public funds and public expenditure. Therefore, the quality of governance in this regard focuses on the implementation and realization of various judicial goals. 'Lawful governance' refers to a clear separation of the various state powers, the promotion of the rule of law, and efficiency in the performance of state tasks. In addition to this, independent judiciary and participation and complaints procedures - through, for example, an ombudsman - are also among discerning traits of lawful governance. This includes, in addition to basic legality, legal certainty and justice.

Effective governance

Thirdly, 'effective governance' indicates the effective and efficient use of public funds. These included, for example, clear laws and regulations, accountability and democratic control of the financial sector. Colebatch (2014) emphasizes the importance of *ownership*. A basic condition for the effectiveness of aid, for example, was that the receiving country would feel 'ownership' of the problem (Burnside and Dollar, 1997 as cited by Coetzee, 2017). The country itself has to take responsibility for the implementation of the assisting relationship. More specifically, the country should be able to carry out everyday functions free of hidden interests to facilitate citizens' public trust in institutional effectiveness (Devaney 2016). This is because proper policies within a developing country cannot be bought with aid. Askarov & Doucouliagos (2015) agreeingly argues that if the government does not see urgency to prioritize poverty reduction, then aid for poverty reduction is not the solution. Development cooperation works best based on the needs of the populum. Elected officials should not hinder governments with their own hobbies.
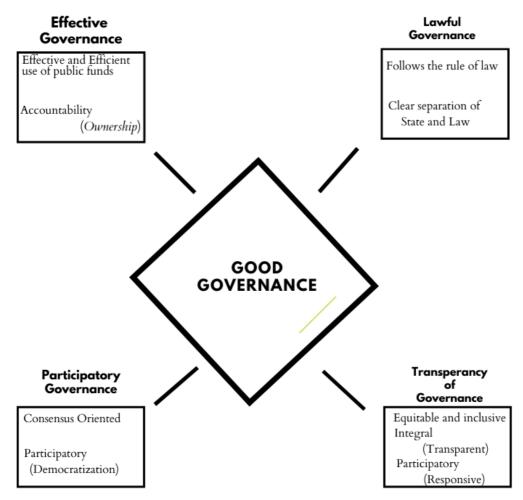
Transparency of governance

The final aspect refers to the government's accountability towards the public and overall integrity. This element of governance, particularly, is very broadly defined in literature. This is because elements of the content are already covered by other aspects or development goals but are yet crucial to the transparency of governance. Saunier and Meganck (2009) (as cited in Devaney, 2016) defines transparency of governance as : *"A policy of sharing information and acting in such a way so as to allow stakeholders to*

gather information that may be critical to uncovering abuses and defending their interests." There should therefore be structures that facilitate public decision making, open channels for communication and access to a wider range of information by interest groups. Furthermore, this characteristic directly covers various phenomena of 'bad governance' that should strive to be overcome such as poor financial management, corruption, restrictions on press freedom, limited capacity of the three state powers and limited or no public administration.

§2.4   Summary

Literature shows that, in general, the concept of good governance is important for the continuous development of democracy within Sint Maarten. This is because, good governance is crucial for the economic development, as institutional instability and internal political turmoil are hampering the necessary (inter-) national investments. Elements such as responsibility, enforcement of legal rules, fundamental rights and free elections are essential. These characteristics are depicted in figure 1.1 (See figure 1.1).

Effective Governance

Effective and Efficient use of public funds

Accountability
                    (*Ownership*)

Lawful Governance

Follows the rule of law

Clear separation of State and Law

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Participatory Governance

Consensus Oriented

Participatory
(Democratization)

Transperancy of Governance

Equitable and inclusive
Integral
            (Transparent)
Participatory
            (Responsive)

Figure 1.1   *Conceptual model of the four principles of Good Governance*

3. Methodology and Data Collection

To allow for the value of these research findings to be judged the analysis method for this study is openly discussed in the following section. To investigate the extent to which Sint Maarten nationals perceive the oligarchic tendencies of their government as a part of the administrative culture, 15 open-ended surveys consisting of 22-items were distributed to Sint Maarteners. These surveys were open ended to allow flexibility in answer options since this study focuses on gather perceptions.

§3.1   Design

In the interest of eliciting in-depth information on the extent to which they perceive administrative culture to be source of no parliamentary turnover, an open-ended survey was created, which is focused towards Sint Maarten natives who are eligible to vote. Given the abstract nature of administrative culture on a small-island state, it is important to not only measure its presence but also the opinions and underlying sentiment of experiencing it. Therefore, a qualitative inductive approach was chosen, which uses an open-ended survey to gather responses. This method of data collection was chosen based on the benefits of structures methods by Couteur & Gardner (2008)

Furthermore, since Sint Maarten does not currently have an extensive body of scientific literature regarding its political climate, this implores that any research should not just establish covariation between two elements but to explore sentiment to establish definition to the ongoing problem. Therefore, this research utilizes a case-centered approach to collecting data. Case studies are ideal for understanding complex and misunderstood phenomenon (Mukhija (2010, p. 420). On the one hand, Gerring (2004, p. 352) argues that the case study, is best defined as an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units. On the other hand, Mukhija (2010, p. 417) defines case studies in-depth, multifaceted explorations of a single social phenomenon. Both definitions include carrying out an in-depth analysis, which is essential to answering the main research questions and achieving social relevance. Furthermore, multiple cases are typically analyzed as an approach to generalizing a theory. However, studying multiple cases often come at the cost of an in-depth investigation. In terms of the current problem, the case study allows for enough in-depth analysis to allow the findings to be convincing, and useful.

However, this method does not allow for the inclusion of non-verbal behavior of the participants, thus limiting the extent to which the findings yield exact reactions towards certain items. This design choice is still regarded as best since, they allow the interviewer to ask more detailed and sensitive questions using a cold medium. Finally, these surveys allow further elaboration on ambiguously stated answers. Thus, adding a human dimension to impersonal data. Due to this flexibility, it is possible to gain a true perception on oligarchic tendencies on the island (Boeije, 2009).

§3.2   Sample

The total number of participants were selected based on Chapter 4, Article 45 of the Sint Maarten Constitution (Government of Sint Maarten, 2010) which stipulates how many members of parliament accurately represent the population. It is currently stated that parliament shall consist of fifteen members if the population of Sint Maarten is 60,000 or less (Government of Sint Maarten, 2010). Based on the current population size of Sint Maarten, this amount N=15) stipulated in the constitution is adequate to obtain a representative view on perception of good governance. The 15 participants (8 female and 7 male) who participated in the questionnaire ranged between the ages of 24-76. Criteria for participation was the respondent should have been eligible to vote in at least four out of the nine last parliamentary elections and must have obtained at least a high school education. Lastly, all participants were required to meet the criterion of having lived on Sint Maarten for >15 years.

On another note, software suggestions of Qualtrics mentions that it takes a high level of participant motivation to fill in a lengthy survey. So, respondents of this questionnaire can be seen as motivated to affect the island's political climate and faultless contenders to participate in this study. Also, participants were mainly selected based on the social network of the first five respondents who disseminated the survey to their peers. Public posts were made asking if any Sint Maarteners were interested in participated. These were essentially video posts explaining the purpose of this study and primarily offering natives a means to have their opinions analyzed scientifically, thus becoming official documentation about Sint Maarten.

The surveys were exclusively available in U.S English, however respondents could respond using the Sint Maarten English dialect since that posed no problem for future analysis. After the successful collection of data, participants were asked whether they know of more nationals who would be interested in voicing their opinion. During this stage, it was crucial to get referred to as many random people as possible, as asking too much members of the same network could eventually lead to bias.

§3.3 Instrument

The measurement instrument used to gather these perceptions is an open-ended survey which consists of 22-items. Given national safety restrictions, sentiment had to be gathered in such a way that did not endanger the respondent or the researcher, so an open-ended survey was chosen as the best standardized alternative to an interview. Results of studies by (Gafni, Moshinsky, & Kapitulnik, 2002) suggest that the questionnaire might be an adequate prescreening tool. Gafni, et al. (2002) then declare that it might save interviewers substantial amounts of time by allowing them to interview a smaller number of candidates, while the cost in validity is probably small to negligible. This type of survey was chosen because it allows for the analysis of discourse of nationals while discussing politics. Further, these answers are not influenced by the opinion of present individuals as they would be in a focus group or group interview.

The questionnaire dealt, more specifically, with their experiences with politics on the island and reactions towards electoral decisions awareness of the oligarchic tendencies (and their perception of politicians' integrity taken in the field of diversity. These topics make up the four constructs of the measurement instrument. The questions of these constructs were gathered by
combining elements of the voter predisposition construct made by Sousa and Moriconi (2013) and the perception of the role of government construct of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP,2016) which probes the public perceptions of the extent of political corruption and personal experience of it. The first two concepts relate to the former while the second two to the latter. These questions were rephrased to elicit extensive verbatim from participants, rather than short, or dichotomous responses.

§3.4   Data Collection

This case study has been granted ethical approval by the BMS ethics committee of the University of Twente, to ensure that it complies with all legal and ethical requirements for conducting field research. Upon gaining approval data collection began, which took place over the span of approximately three weeks starting from April 27th, 2020 through May 18th, 2020. Before commencing with the survey, participants were requested to carefully read over the informed consent which denoted the purpose, aim and relevance of this research. Given the sensitive nature of inquiring political opinions within a tight-knit community, participants were clearly explained that this research that this research is not meant to reprimand, expose, ostracize and/or defame any (previously) elected officials (Appendix I). They were reassured their anonymity and confidentiality of any disclosed personal data and reminded that their participation is voluntary. If participants complied with these terms, they indicated their agreement by responding 'Yes' to the first question.

During the data collection process, participants were required to complete an online survey made using the Qualtrics software. The participants were suggested to complete the survey in a quiet environment preferably when there were not many pressing matters for the respondents. This

questionnaire addressed with their experiences with politics on the island and reactions towards electoral decisions (*e.g.: Looking back on the first decade (2010-2020) of country Sint Maarten, what are your thoughts on the political climate?*), awareness of the democratic flaws (*e.g.: To what extent do you believe that there has been enough change in the political arena over the last 9 years?*) their perception of politicians' integrity taken in the field of diversity (*e.g.: How far have elected officials gone to uphold and fulfill any promises made during their campaign?*) and their perception of democracy in combination with the administrative culture (*e.g.,: To what extent was/were your decision(s) in the past 7 parliamentarian elections free of any external influence?*).

2 of the 15 respondents made known that it was easier for them to express themselves verbally and therefor requested to have their responses recorded via an interview. These two interviews were structured and used the online questionnaire as an interview guide. To ensure that these results contained similar measures to the remaining 13 there were no deviations from the interview guide and responses were immediately transcribed word for word during the interview. These structured interviews proved to be challenging since respondents were eager to begin discussing their personal beliefs in addition to the measures, however participants were reminded that there was a ridged guide to follow for the interview and that any additional thoughts should be saved until question 21 which was an open question aimed at collecting additional information.

Main Theme	Sub-themes
Political climate	Standpoint
	Awareness
	Sentiment
Integrity	Political integrity
	Administration integrity
	Personal belief
	Subjective norm
Presence of Oligarchy	Democracy
	Experience
Administrative culture influence	Administrative culture
	Personal actions
	Actions of others
	Other points for consideration

Table 3.1   Brief overview of main- and subthemes in codebook.

The mean **response time for completing the questionnaire** was approximately 41.34 minutes. Upon completion, participants were thanked for filling it in the and were reminded that participation is voluntary and that their responses can be deleted at the participants discretion. Furthermore, they received the contact details of the main researcher in case there were any concerns, hesitations or if they were interested in the findings of the case study.

§3.5   Data Analysis

A phenomenological, qualitative research method was used to explore citizens perceptions of Sint Maartens political situation. As was mentioned in the previous paragraphs, responses were collected through an open-ended questionnaire. Verbatim was segmented and coded with help of the software program ATLAS.ti. The first step was creating a start list of codes prior to information-gathering. That list is derived from from the conceptual framework, research questions, problem areas, and key variables indicated by other researchers (Table 3.1). Boeije (2009) considers the process of coding as the most important tool for analysis in her book, therefor five of 15 responses were coded and discussed by both

researchers. This process had to repeat a total of three times to achieve consensus on the meaning of certain codes. This led to three subcategories to be added to added to the codebook. By linking pieces of text to codes, themes are mentioned in the research data (Boeije, 2009, p. 84 The second step in the data analysis was 'axial' coding. This obsoletes the meaning of the main concepts, describes them and merges or splits where necessary (Boeije, 2009, p. 99). An example of the procedure of breaking up a code was the code 'integrity perception' which was broken down into the codes 'perceived administrative integrity' and 'perceived political integrity'. To make the result clearer, the main codes and sub codes created are displayed hierarchically in the final code tree (Appendix III).

In the subsequent phase of 'selective' coding, connections were sought, and the emphasis was placed, as Boeije (2009) describes 'on integration and the making of links between the categories' (p. 106). At this stage, both researchers discussed the codes in-depth until a consensus was met on at least 70% of the categories thereby resulting in a substantial level Cohens Kappa of 0.71 (Cohen, 1960). Gathering a deeper sense of meaning during data collection is crucial considering the newness of the topic and this case. This method of analysis has benefited both reliability and validity. By labeling it as close as possible to the respondent's statements, the internal validity is increased. The researcher's own interpretations are also excluded as much as possible. The clear and structured display of the found labels by means of an encryption system has increased reliability, by making all data easily reflected in the statements of the respondents. This resulted in the final code tree (appendix III) and the findings presented in the next chapter.

4. Results

This chapter describes the research results. The respondents described their experiences on various topics concerning Sint Maarten's political climate. The perceptions that are directly linked to the four principles of good governance are presented in this chapter.

§4.1 Participatory Governance

The respondents described similar perceptions about the participatory element of good governance. A number of respondents described the parliamentary elections as being mostly controlled by self-driven purposes of candidates, indicating that officials tend to be more self-serving (See table 4.1). Examples of this can be gathered from the frequently mentioned point that sittings of parliament have never been able to last for the full term. "The constant holding of elections due to lack of communication within parties which led to them throwing down the government" (Respondent 11:2)". Most respondents indicated that they were not in agreement with the results of the previous elections, with some even stating that they were still dissatisfied after two or more elections. However, many participants perceive newer candidates to be more consensus oriented, and genuinely interested in obtaining better representation in parliament. A main example of this sentiment can be found in the table below (see table 4.1).

Additionally, several respondents described that participation is also hindered for newer candidates given the strong influence of older officials. This was often described as one of the main causes of the current state of the political climate. E.g.: *"[..] the older heads are continuously re-elected and not making any changes"* (Respondent 6:2). This has also led to partakers often describing the situation as hopeful for future improvements, as newer candidates begin to secure more seats in parliament. A prime example was given by Respondent 2, who believed that:

> *"[..] the "millennial" politicians are shifting away from the "party politics" and doing what's right. The older ones are all for themselves."*

Lastly, almost all respondents indicated a level of belief that they possess some level of control over shaping a better future in terms of politics, as long as there is a change among current official and in demeaner. "*The population of [Sint Maarten] has the full control of whom enters the government. Once the people widen up and stop taking short term solutions and handouts, we will prosper*" (Respondent 11:14)." There is only one respondent who believes that individuals have no influence, because power only lies in numbers. However, this respondent (Respondent 13) indicated a general negative disposition towards the current political situation and that it is difficult to maintain hope in this situation.

Principle of Good Governance	Reoccurring theme(s)	Description	Exemplary Quotations
1. Participatory Governance	1a. Consensus oriented	Best interests of the population are clearly reflected within actions undertaken by the administration.	• "We have some real outspoken and brutally honest persons fighting for the future of the country today" (Response 6) • "The scale shifted in a new direction, with younger politicians" (Response 9)
	1b. Lack of consensus	Daily activities of the government are misaligned with the needs and well-being of the population.	• "The failure to maintain a full-term government for four years as well as to address many of the socio-economic issues faced on the island shows this lack of change." (Response 3) • "[New] people get into power and the work that was in progress is cancelled in the earlier stages." (Response 8)
	1c. Participatory	Citizens generally perceive that they can shape and control the political environment within the small state democracy of Sint Maarten.	• "I feel like I can affect the future. [...] However, I still must start small and motivate people to change." (Response 8) • "I have the right to vote and to postulate myself to be elected." (Response 1)
	1d. Gatekept	Eligibility to participate in events crucial to developing the island is perceived to be withheld only for a small group with pre-existing ties to power.	• "Newer candidates often [...] are added to party rosters to have a more diverse look to the public." Response 8 • "Seeing how the older heads are continuously re-elected and not making any changes." (Response 6) • "[The situation is] parallel to a hostile takeover." (Response 1)

Table 4.1   Description and examples of reoccurring themes from the data which relate to the 'Participatory' principle of Governance

§4.2 Lawful Governance

All respondents did not directly mention issues regarding the main democratic powers within the small-island state. However, there is frequent mention of "party politics" which is a colloquial way of describing a political party who tries their best to obtain outright control of parliament and the cabinet of ministers. E.g.: *"The fight [is] for Ministries in spite of [them being] Parliamentary elections."* (Respondent 1). Taking this into account, it is noticeable that respondents often mentioned that politicians regularly attempt to merge these executive and legislative powers of democracy (See table 4.2). "*Since the first invocation of "Article 59", COM & MP's Toss it around as a "hot potato" only to try and get political power.*"(Response 2:2). This quote exemplifies how the coalition based electoral system allows candidates to strategize to obtain outright power, all while they are technically within the rules, goals and values of the constitution. However, almost all respondents once again expressed that most newer candidates are abandoning these ways and are striving to have a more diverse parliamentary sitting. Although, citizens often described these newer candidates as a single step in the right direction, claiming that they *"are usually added to party rosters to have a more diverse look to the public"* (Respondent 8). Respondent 3 stated that this is about the lack of proper legislation thus allowing these loopholes to exist within the electoral system of the country.

Contrary to separation of powers, there was little to nothing mentioned about elected officials being exemplary pillars of adherence to law. Respondent 9, however, made a statement which shows that some citizens have decided to counter injustice by refusing to seek hand-outs from government officials (See table 4.2). If this holds true, officials are indirectly deterring the government from performing multiple unlawful actions. Since there is a no perceived lawfulness of governance, all respondents have indicated to some that the system and those who run it are involved in corruption. (E.g.: "A high degree of corruption lives within the society" Respondent 9). Though, there is a difference in the extent to exactly how corrupt the system is. On the one hand, there are numerous strong statements that claim there is a serious issue with corruption:

> *All politicians are corrupt, [..] The arena on [Sint Maarten] is difficult where the claws still have their hands in the old veterans and the new kids on the block think they have all the answers. It is a passing competition of epic performers* --(Respondent 13)."

On the other hand, most participants still indicated that while there is corruption, the system can still be fixed once unintegral candidates are disallowed from politics. (E.g.: I do the believe that there are key figures that should no longer be able to even run for a seat because they have had numerous opportunities to make a change and have failed to help us move forward as a country" – Response 7) There are a number of respondents who strongly refused to admit that there are no clean alternatives, since newer members have not yet been given the time and opportunity to perform their new tasks independently. Respondent 1 summed this thought up by stating: "*There's a clean alternative with one particular political party and I believe also with some candidates across the various party in spite of the leadership* -- (Response 1).

Principle of Good Governance	Recurring theme(s)	Description	Exemplary Quotations
2. Lawful governance	2a. Separation of rule and law	Clear separation between the executive, legislative, and judicial powers within the small island state.	• "The "millennial" politicians are shifting away from the "party politics" and doing what's right."(Response 2) • "[S]ome new candidates are currently trying to educate the population on the role of parliament and how parliament represents the people."(Response 10)
	2b. Merging of powers	Indistinguishable political influence of elected officials within all three powers of the democratic system.	• "Also, the elected persons failed to understand their roles. It was more about the titles, rather than the job." [..] Sometimes it is persons who were on a party, but don't like how the party is going, so they want to do their own thing or don't want to be number 2. they want to call the shots. (Response 11) • We've experienced where the highest vote getter [omitted] was at one point not a sitting member of Parliament. This accrued as he vacated his place in Parliament to fulfill duties in the Executive Branch (Response 12).
	2c. Citizens rule of law	Actions undertaken by the controlling body are all in accordance with the judicial regulations that govern Sint Maarten.	• People try not to depend on [the government and make [things] happen after having a without government support. (Response 9)
	2d. Corruption of main powers	Politicians engage in nefarious activities against the judicial regulations that govern Sint Maarten.	• "We see a trend in politicians engaging in corruption or becoming corrupt once they have entered into power. [...] This was also shown to be evident by the many investigative criminal outcomes that many politicians or civil servants found themselves in." (Response 3) • "There are no clean alternatives. The persons who are clean are not interested in running for election."(Response 14)

Table 4.2   Description and examples of reoccurring themes from the data which relate to the 'Lawful' principle of Governance

§4.3 Effective Governance

Regarding the concept of effectiveness of governance. There was almost a unanimous agreement among participants that public funds are not spent in the general (do you mean "on the general public"?) in the best manner. Examples of this are mentioned in connection to the costs related to the frequently held elections. Respondent 3 gave the lone example of public funds being efficiently used by pointing out that developments related to tourism development are few of the only projects that have successfully had funds allocated and realized. Table 4.3 shows two clear examples of moments when participants perceived public funds to be misallocated. However, Respondent 5 mentioned several projects that have recently started using the public funds but have not been realized yet e.g.: the ring road and the new cricket field.

Furthermore, the other aspect of effective governance, ownership, had little to no responses that indicated whether elected officials are frequently held accountable during their time in office (See table 4.3). Participant 12 was the only person who indicated that there is currently some level of accountability for politicians, due to a change among the public. However, no participants have mentioned pre-existing structures meant to hold the government accountable for the ongoing corruption and scandals. Another theme that emerged regarding effectiveness, was that public officials have recently been sanctioned, which provided a form of obligated accountability. Three respondents mention how one former parliamentarian, was recently relieved of his duties due to discoveries during criminal investigations. These sanctions have led to this member being dishonorably discharged and sentenced to serve time. Although, it is noteworthy to mention that this is the only parliamentarian mentioned among all participants, thus meaning that this form of accountability is infrequent.

Lastly, the most reoccurring theme within this principle of good governance was the overall lack of ownership. Almost all participants have argued that officials lack a sense of ownership and partake in unethical behavior because of this. (E.g.: "For many years we've had people who ran with little qualifications and that too has created a strong disinterest for voters" – Respondent 4)
Meanwhile, there are two teams whose respondents indicated that they believe the public is mainly responsible for the lack of accountability. This is again because the government often makes appointments and imposes rules on all cancelling while out bills not yet passed from previous sittings. What is striking is that the respondents feel responsible to take over this role. The respondents do not have any affiliation to politics, whereas they feel highly responsible. In addition, the majority of participants have indicated that politicians have only been allowed to continue with such level of lawlessness because of the lack accountability from the publics' side:

> "*Politicians are only corrupt when the voters do not hold them [accountable]. Politicians on Sint Maarten are aware the inhabitants are not politically savvy and abuse their given powers*" – Respondent 12

Principle of Good Governance	Reoccurring theme(s)	Description	Exemplary Quotations
3. Effective Governance	3a. Efficacy and efficient public funds usage	Public funds are controllably spent in the interest of the general public.	• "When it has to do with economic/touristic oriented developments, we have seen efforts being made by politicians" (Response 3)
	3b. Citizens believe that public funds are squandered by elected officials	Public funds are being spent untraceably, and on matters which hold little to no increase in public value.	• "The mere fact that we do not have a disaster fund and the willingness to call elections twice, after the worst hurricane to hit this island is proof in the pudding." (Response 4) • "After hurricane Irma and Maria instead of relief programs, the government put money into [two] election campaigns, the repurchasing flags that were stolen. That really indicates where their priorities are." (Response 8)
	3c. Accountability	Elected officials are formally or publicly held accountable for any misconduct during their time in office.	• "The voting population has never made it a priority for Political parties to present their portfolios during elections. The silver lining to the above question is the voters have woken up." (Response 12)
	3d. Involuntary accountability	Due to external forces, elected officials were publicly held accountable for any misconduct during their time in office.	• "Just recently [political official] was formerly charged for corruption for the bribing [political official] in 2012-2013." (Response 6)
	3e. Lack of ownership	Elected officials do not acknowledge their parts in political mishaps. Furthermore, there is a lack of controlling structures ensuring elected officials adhere to protocols.	• "making difficult or unpopular decisions is not a forte of our elected officials" (Response 1) • "the general public needs to be more involved in the daily politics of the Sint Maarten, as well as be able to hold officials accountable." (Response 3) • "St. Maarten has been too long lawless. It is always 'what is in it for me'." (Response 15)

Table 4.3   Description and examples of reoccurring themes from the data which relate to the 'Effective' principle of Governance

§4.4 Transparency of Governance

When analyzing the importance of transparency, all respondents are clear. In principle, it is about accountability, effectiveness and adhering to the law. However, there is little agreement on whether the political arena is equitable and inclusive of all members. Various respondents mentioned that there are often private donors involved which then gives these people an advantage of knowing what occurs within government. Respondent 13, however, pointed out that while information may not always be formally disseminated. Members of the general public are almost always kept in the loop through the informal networks of the island (See table 4.4). Another point with little to no reoccurring themes is that of political integrity. Given the previous discussions surrounding the high levels of corruption, it can be concluded that citizens do not perceive much integrity from their elected officials:

> "*Corruption, bias and nepotism have played major themes in each of the many elections we've had over the years.*" – Respondent 7

Ultimately, the degree of importance is mainly expressed in creating support. Respondents believe that transparency can greatly increase support for policies, and thereby try to create and maintain support through fake transparency. That includes trust, and empty promises according to Respondent 4: "The last decade has shown a total lack of trust in our leaders, poor preparation *and planning.*" Other respondents have indicated that by working on transparency in a good way, this will create a lot of movement and bad politicians will be extracted from power. Additionally, clear limits to transparency are experienced and board members are not always willing to give the public access. This is particularly important when it comes to vacancies or financial matters. Respondents often indicate that citizens sometimes become over-invested in a particular party and develop party loyalty: *"As a little girl I was raised to only vote/support for the NA party."* (Response 11). In addition, the limits of transparency are seen in familial obligations, disciplinary and criminal cases and situations relating to unprofessional conduct. All respondents indicated that too much transparency can also become inefficient, because within a small–island state everyone can get close enough to a public official to ask for favors:

> "*[...] Many people are deemed to receive favorable treatment, as well as be 'excused' from questionable activity based on who they know. This is also present on micro levels such as in terms of treatment received from police officials or civil servants in public establishments. There are often connections between people which could lead to persons receiving favorable treatment from public officials such as grants, permits, etc.*" – Respondent 3

Principle of Good Governance	Reoccurring theme(s)	Description	Exemplary Quotations
4. Transparency of governance	4a. Equitable and inclusive	Citizens perceive that they are important and are mostly kept abreast of important developments within the small-islands' democratic system.	• "We all can run for elections" (Response 3) • "[...] everyone knows whose agenda they need to push." (Response 13)
	4b. Exclusive and biased	Access/influence and information regarding major political decisions are perceived to be beyond the reach of the average citizen.	• "The average citizen has little to no influence on the politics of Sint Maarten." (Response 3) • "Having influence all depends on how influential the person is with community, or how financially strong they are." (Response 10)
	4c. Integral	Citizens perceive elected officials to have high levels of administrative and personal integrity.	• "But few are in politics and have their own and independent mind and opinions." (Response 9) • "not all are corrupt there are a few that actually have the people of SXM at heart" (Response 11)
	4d. Lack of integrity	It is believed that elected officials lack integrity and are therefore not to be trusted based on both (in)formal and word of mouth	• "It also comes across as if many of the politicians often favour personal benefit instead of prioritizing the needs of the people" (Response 3) • "persons who gave me hope such as [Parliamentarian] turn out to be a disappointment." (Response 11)
	4e. Overly participatory	Citizens perceive that personal input from the general public is actively gathered, taken into consideration and implemented.	• "the elected promise people in impoverished situations food and house supplies like stoves and fridges." (Response 5)
	4f. Non-interactive	Citizens believe that elected officials act primarily on their own behalf and not on public value.	• "Robbery! Mislead! Unfair! Selfish!" (Response 6) • "Most parties are financially funded by the private sector for what they have done for them/planning to do for them." (Response 10)

Table 4.4   Description and examples of reoccurring themes from the data which relate to the 'Transparency' principle of Governance

5. Conclusion and Discussion

§5.1 Conclusion

The dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles on October 10th, 2010 was partially based on the idea of ending temporary support and increasing dependence on aid from the Dutch government and promoting self-reliance. This goes in hand with the multidimensional concept of *good governance* which indicates that the governing body secures *the integrity of the public administration, properly manages public funds and democratic monitoring of it, the fight against corruption, respect for human rights, the fight against poverty, while adhering to the rule of law and promoting the democratization of society*. This definition outlines four main aspects of governance that the government must adhere to be considered facilitators of good governance. These are participatory governance, lawful governance, effective governance and transparency of governance.

 Reflecting on Sint Maarten's first decade as a country, strengthens Anckar (2002) and Veenendaal's (2013) argument that the smaller a society is, the more susceptible public welfare is to problems. Upon nearing ten years since becoming independent, the small island state of Sint Maarten has experienced a democratic backslide caused by the constant restructuring of parliament. Although the islands' elections are typically carried out in a democratic fashion, for example, postulated candidates compete for office and active citizen participation (Higley & Best, 2009). While small-island states generally, meet the requirements of a democracy. However, elections held during the last decade have mainly led to the re-election of individuals who were previously in power.

 Given the uncommonness of this situation in comparison to other small island democracies, it became significant to focus on gathering in-depth reflections of how civilians experienced the counties first decade of independent. Therefore, the main research question research of this thesis is: '*What are Sint Maarten citizens main perceptions on the democratic adherence to political good governance within the small island state ?'* To answer this, open-ended questionnaires were distributed among fifteen natives and analyzed according to the coding scheme (See appendix III). The discourses were then associated with the four **principles** of good governance compliance. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the traditional electoral model, characterized by frequent elections, a multi-party system and coalition governments, clearly have political effects within Sint Maarten because of an informal context dominated by personalistic politics, clientelism and patronage, and sharp polarization. According to participants, this is the reason why Sint Maarten is inundated by political fragmentation and instability, having an average of one government per year since 2010. As a result, citizens have not perceived many improvements to the pre-2010 situation when taking the principles of good governance and the municipal model. More specifically, participants have reported a misalignment between the current state of politics and of the four principles of good governance.

Participatory governance

First, regarding the perception on participatory governance, most participants describe that the majority of the decade was govern by a minority group, deemed locally as 'older heads', who are continuously reelected despite former proof of incompetence. Conversely, most of these very respondents do indicate that with the emergence of younger parties, fresher perspectives are being brought to parliament, which are more representative of the general population. Furthermore, it is general perceived that individuals have the power to actively control and shape the political environment on the island. However, most respondents are more confident in their own capabilities to do this, and less convinced of that of the population, unless there is a change in demeanor. Respondent 11 went as far as to state:

"I do believe we will be prosperous if the residents of SXM wake up and stop tolerating nonsense. I also believe to make this change we the young generation living abroad, have to make efforts to move back home with the knowledge we have to turn our island around."

However, response also show that true participation is often withheld from the newer candidates after being elected. Respondents mention often that the voices of these younger members are parliament are often down casted by older members who have countering beliefs. All things considered, results show that while the government has made steps towards achieving a truly participatory political environment, much is a bit to be desired in regard to elected officials being more consensus oriented, and achieving true political power once a new candidate is elected in.

Lawful governance

The second principle of good governance had the least number of recurring themes when compared to the others. There are no mentions of elected officials adhering to the proper separation of the trias politicas to properly adhere to the values of democracy. This signifies a rather large misalignment between the principle of lawfulness and the stat Respondent 12 gives an example of when a former parliamentarian blatantly skipped out on the duties they were elected for, to secure power in the executive branch (See table 4.2)

Further, there were no explicit mentions of elected officials being prime examples of proper legal conduct. The only indication of proper adherence to these rules are the citizens who have risen above falling for corruption to better themselves as stated by Respondent 9 (see table 4.2). As a result of these perceptions, all participants have mentioned that they view the Sint Maarten government to be corrupt. The difference among these perceptions lies within the source of the corruption (size vs. immoral officials) and the degree of the corruption (total corruption vs some corruption). However, the majority of participants mention that to deem all elected officials as corrupt is over exaggeration of the situation and poorly reflect those who try to do the right thing:

"I get how [people would be tempted to say all are corrupt], due to the fact that's we've seen over and under how everyone said that they'll be different and make a change... and end up in the same line as the ones we are already complaining about. But! Some politicians do go in with positive intensions, to only get shut down by the negative surroundings" –Respondent 2:6

Thus, indicating that people believe that participants view corruption as an inevitable part of the small island democracy. Respondents 11 and 2 jokingly mentioned that this is how politics is expected to work in all small island states:

"Isn't it a Caribbean thing ? Like if you know people in high places or I should rather say if you have a "good" last name you will definitely get through with things faster than somebody without one." –Respondent 11:4

"One hand cannot wash itself. If I help you, I expect some help in return later on in the further. That's the unfortunate game that's played here on the island." –Respondent 2:15

These statements shine light on the essence of everything that contradicts impartial politics. The laws that are in use are not always consistently observed in practice. And with such cavalier attitudes towards this problem making it even more alarming. Given the abovementioned, it can be determined that there is a clear misalignment between the principal of lawful governance and the way politics are currently conducted on the island.

Effective governance

Thirdly, regarding effective governance, most participants have noted to some extent a gap between this core democratic value and compliance in daily practices. Respondent 3 describes an absence of social support which is a result of poorly allocated funds.

> "[..] *in relation to addressing local issues, it also comes across as if many of the politicians often favor personal benefit instead of prioritizing the needs of the people. This was also reflected in the hurricane season of 2017 with Irma and Maria. […] Lastly, there have been chronic political, as well as socio-economic issues on the island that have been around for decades where we have failed to see little to no progress in these areas such as education, crimes, housing, poverty, GEBE, the dump, etc. This shows a lack of progression in these areas.*" –Respondent 3:2

Supporting this statement, Respondent 8 mentioned how they perceived public funds to be squandered on trivial things such as replacing a flag off of Cole Bay hill (see table 4.3). This misalignment is correlated to the overall perception of political corruption.

Relating to accountability, based on the result, it can be concluded that this model of governance has all emerged through a long and idiosyncratic process, and therefore do not have many parties that hold elected officials accountable. According to participants, it is for this reason that Sint Maarten is inundated by political fragmentation and instability, having an average of one government per year since 2010. Within the Sint Maarten government upon instating the constitution there was clearly hope that the establishment would lead to a stronger public administration. Yet, the questionnaire responses have revealed that this hope has certainly not yet come true and leaves the question of whether this will happen in the future, if officials do not create a system of accountability. Respondent 12 was the only answer which indicated that accountability is now in the pre-stages of development among newer voters, but this is seen as more of a silver lining to an ongoing issue (See table 4.3). However, there appears to be a trend of involuntary accountability since numerous respondents proudly mention how a former parliamentarian was finally held accountable for their misdeeds. This overall lack of ownership shows that there is major misalignment regarding effective and governance and the daily operations of the Sint Maarten government.

Transparency of governance

Lastly, transparency in public action is one of the fundamental pillars of the soundness of governance. Perceptions on the participatory element research is very positive, in fact there are some participants that describe this over participation as a bad thing. (*E.g.: [People have] a lack of knowledge of politics. [T]heir feelings go by what they see and hear, not by facts and research*". Respondent 6) In addition, the general population believes to be included as eligible contenders for elections. Critical notes are shared about the publication of the debate that led to a decision; however, these are mostly dispersed via informal networks and not are often exaggerations of the truth. In this way, it can be practically concluded that the Sint Maarten government operates with some transparency, albeit one in unethical form. This is a possible explanation for the case of Sint Maarten in which, when analyzing the results, it becomes apparent that citizens are anticipating change, or that they are at least aware of the flawed democracy and are inactively seeking a different route:

> " I also believe that in a democratic state where the rule of law should be upheld, what is being done should be transparent and should be able to be 'screened' or open for scrutiny by the public. How politicians in the past has addressed political issues has been questionable." –Respondent 3:3

Integrity, however, has a much more negative perception by respondents, with the only claims of integrity being reserved for newer politicians. Respondent 8 claims that this is a result of "*Having had many elections where much was not being done by elected officials*" while numerous other claims that this is just a result of the morally corrupt "older heads" (See table 4.4). Another striking fact is that no respondents have mentioned factors that are currently strengthening the island's integrity system. In addition to this, economic migration was another point for concern brought up by multiple respondents. This affects political integrity since many people live temporarily on the island and are focused on their own (economic) progress, so there is little public support for the strengthening of the overall integrity.

"[..] in Sint Maarten there is strength in numbers and the average citizen is a foreigner and there are more of them than us who are 'from here'" –Respondent 5:14

Respondents perceive that the combination of weak formal institutions and strong informal politics ensures that individual leadership and relations within the political elite have a major influence on the functioning of politics and governance. By doing this, they propose that a part of the blame lies on the population.

> "*The system is broken, it has been for years, the elected promise people in impoverished situations food and house supplies like stoves and fridges. Our community is also to blame, we have made it to easy for them, we've put a price on a thing that shouldn't be valued lowly*" – Respondent 5:6

However, overall there is a noticeable level of complacency, especially in regard to perceived individual contributions to politics. This is essentially the result of citizens acting in accord with the moral values and standards and the related rules, with little to no resistance. This applies not only to the state of the political climate, but also to the degree of helplessness experienced by citizens. The culture of Sint Maarten is very hierarchical, this systemic way of operating has left residents with a distrust in this flawed democratic system due to lack of accountability and little hope for change. The lack of authority affects the integrity of directors and public officials in small island municipalities. All in all, while there is great misalignment in terms of the integrity of the governance, there is quite an alignment with the other factors of governance transparency. However, given that these tend to be more informal methods, it can be determined that there is some misalignment between this concept and reality, but by far not as much as in the other principles

Based on the respondent's input, a deeper perception of adherence to the principles was gathered. Table 5.1 gives an overview of whether these undertakings of the Sint Maarten government are in complete alignment with the principles of good governance (See table 5.1).

Principle of Good Governance	Ideal situation	Situation in Sint Maarten	Alignment
Participatory Governance	Perceived inclusiveness in political decisions. All candidates have equal chance to secure power	Citizens feel influential. New candidates are welcomed, but once elected are overshadowed by veterans	Moderate misalignment
Lawful Governance	Adherence to rule of law	Nonadherence to legal regulations and blurring of democratic powers	Total misalignment
Effective Governance	Good use of public funds and high integrity of politicians	Lack of integrity and perceived misuse of public funds	Total misalignment
Transparency of Governance	High integrity of parliamentarians. Transparency of information and considers social input.	Inside news is disseminated via informal networks. However, citizens' individual concerns are overlooked	Some Misalignment

Table 5.1   Overview of alignment between Sint Maarten's situation and the principles of good governance

§ 5.2 Discussion

Politics in small states is characterized by executive dominance over other institutions in addition to a greater partiality for conflicts of interest, personalized competition and particularistic relationships between voters and elected officials, according to respondents in this study. This is primarily due to the lack of professionalism and (financial) resources of other institutions, which as a result are largely dependent on the government. Respondent 9 gave an example of this democratic flaw by stating: '*[…] with the average voters unable to influence the election financially, businesses use investments and take advantage of politicians".* In addition, the importance of interpersonal relations and the ensuing social pressures are putting at stake the neutrality and independence of institutions such as the media, bureaucracy and the judiciary.

Secondly, the responses have also shown that the personalistic political dynamics in Sint Maarten are by no means soft-hearted or consensus oriented. All respondents indicated that, there is a sharply polarized political climate, in which personal demands are always at the top of the list (Respondent 3). Because political affiliations are so widely known, there is also a much clearer dividing line between supporters of the various political parties. According to several respondents, this phenomenon can be seen or described as political tribalism, in the sense that people have little contact with political nonconformists. Furthermore, a distinct lack in opposition results in a weak position for the parliaments, through personal relationships and the small size of parliament, the members of the governing party are simply loyal to their government and political leaders..As a result, respondents described parliamentary elections as a *rubber stamp*: it takes over and authorizes actual government decisions almost in no way.

> E.g.: "*To some extent there hasnt been enough change becuase the most people in parliament are still those from 2010*" (Respondent 8). *The relatively weak position of parliament, but also the lack of the media, the judiciary and the civil service, ultimately leads, to a skewed and dominant position of the government. Interviews show that there are also large differences in power within the government, in the sense that heads of government usually dominate the other ministers and manage to attract a great deal of individual power*" (Respondent 10).

Thirdly, in a usual democratic setting, laws and rules are in place for the creation of companies and are assessed as adequate by judiciaries. However, respondents indicate that, on Sint Maarten, a number of aspects are (very) bureaucratic. The previous Dutch regulations and its policies, together with the development agenda of Sint Maarten islands. Roitman and Veenendaal (2016) argued that they were unsuccessful in achieving greater prosperity on the island for several reasons. Firstly, the large amount of legislation places a (too) high administrative burden on small island states. Some controversial legislation also led to the public turning against the transition and against the administration and calling for '*total independence*'. Secondly, the Dutch does not contain standards such as lower limits for prosperity while there is a lack of coordination between different departments. Thirdly, the current approach to poverty reduction and good governance does not consider the different levels of development and local differences between the islands. In addition, there are typically multiple arrangements to prevent government interference. So, public officials are sending mixed signals in terms of safeguarding integrity regarding business. The financial sector and some professional organizations have put in place strong mechanisms, including integrity and complaints procedures. Other sectors are less energetic and have little to no mechanisms that guarantee integrity. However, since the destruction of the island infrastructure in 2017, the local business community is raising awareness about good governance: "*[I find it odd that Sint Maarten] has no vision plan, no delta plan for it social and economic development*" (Respondent 9). Finally, due to the smallness of society and the lack of privacy, people are generally aware of each other's political preferences, and if they are not, they may or may not be correctly derived from family relationship, therefor some citizens are faced with external pressure that hinders them from freely altering their decision. This greater homogeneity and dominance of the parliament ensure a relatively weak position of parliamentary opposition (Coller & Cordero, 2018). Because in such circumstances abuses of power and authoritarian leadership are lurking, this characteristic of small states also undermines the possibilities for democratic governance.

> "*It is always what is in it for me. An investor comes and want to invest but needs to go through channels to get it done... well if I get something, I will have them assist you in getting the documents needed*" (Respondent 11), "*Many people are deemed to receive favorable treatment, as well as be 'excused' from questionable activity based on who they know*" (Respondent 3).

Therefore, the majority of respondents are justified when they argue that the small scale naturally impacts the real quality of the democratic system.

Finally, in addition to small scale and islandism, another concept played an important role in this research, namely 'passive acceptance'. Transparency in public action is one of the fundamental pillars of the soundness of governance. This is a possible explanation for the case of Sint Maarten which reveals that a hierarchical culture may lead to problems when public officials are not fully transparent. When analyzing the results, it becomes apparent that citizens are anticipating change, or that they are at least aware of the flawed democracy and are inactively seeking a different route. As a result, there is a quite noticeable level of complacency, especially in regard to perceived individual contributions to politics. This is essentially the result of citizens acting in accord with the questionable values, standards and related rules, with little to no resistance.

This applies not only to the state of the political climate, but also to the degree of helplessness experienced by citizens. Examples of passed regulations that natives typically find ambiguous are those related to foreigners. As was mentioned in paragraph 5.1 there is widespread economic migration: people come to the island to work there and leave over time to work on another island. As a result, Sint Maarten is essentially deemed as the 'melting pot' of the Caribbean. A large percentage of the population lives on the island for less than five years. Another result of the migration flow, according to Respondent 11 is the so-called "*what's in it for me*" culture. These migrants tend to focus on their own progress and

generally not so much on the (administrative) development and progress of the island. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that people on the island are quick to vote for the person who gives them a sum of money or a t-shirt. According to various respondents, this facilitates an unethical patronage system on the island.

As mentioned earlier (§5.1) majority of principles of good governance scored poorly when participants reflected on their first decade as a country. What remains interesting is that as the discourse around transparency and the equal opportunity are still quite positive, despite there being a misalignment. If members do not really have problem accessing governance decisions, policies and processes among other things, the question is how it is that most principles are still so poorly aligned in its respective area. According to literature, possible answers for this lies on a more covert level of political control on Sint Maarten, overall integrity perception of politicians and the administrative culture within the small island state. These concepts are discussed below.

Oligarchism as a source of negative perception

As many respondents indicate, parliament is often ran by 'older heads' who overshadow the will of newer elected officials. When democracies tend to be ruled by only a few members of the population, they are referred to as an 'oligarchy'. In this case, the older heads, who are a minority, are the sole source of any significant political action (Cassinelli, 1953, p. 782). Cassinelli (1953) goes on to identify this democratic flaw as: *specialization of political functions, with authority vested in a minority, as the best—perhaps only— way to get important political results*. A prime example of oligarchism is the frequent mentioning of lack of turnover in parliament. elite domination is quite prevalent in most small–island states although they are all consistently classified as democracies (Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016). In small-scale islands, there is a greater a mingling of personal relationships with functional- and business relationships than in large-scale civilizations.

The emergence of oligarchy, according to Kiewiet and Lewis-Beck (2011) may very well be due to the ever-growing loyalty scheme behind a candidate. These authors present the argument is that voting is largely socio-tropic in nature. So, families, friends and other major campaign donors benefit because their ally in parliament will not get out quickly. Moreover, with fewer opposing members upon forming a coalition, these members most likely hold a controlling interest, this may be an incentive for more people to cast their votes for that person. Corbett (2013) has therefor rightfully concluded that the way no-confidence and constantly shifting coalition governments often appears as the contrast of the democratic ideal. Corbett (2013) strengthens this argument by claiming that in combination with the propensity for power to be concentrated in individuals, rather than the office they hold, there also exists the the underlying threat of social ostracism. Political practice on Sint Maarten reason for this was given by (Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016, p.84) which states that the electoral system was based on proportional representation was not designed to foster unity and, by extension, has helped to support oligarchical tendencies. While examples of elite domination in larger democracies are relatively well-known for a variety of reasons, oligarchic tendencies in small jurisdictions have so far been largely ignored in the scholarly literature (Roitman & Veenendaal, 2016, p.70).

Low political integrity as a source of negative perception

Most participants have mentioned to some extent a gap between this core democratic value and compliance in daily practices. Whether it be the actions of politicians, their personal actions during election periods, the subjective norm. Many claims that the laws that are in use are not always consistently observed in practice. According to most participants, this is mainly caused by a low perceived integrity of politicians. E.g.: "Having had many elections where much was not being done by elected officials"

(Participant 8). According to interview responses, despite having numerous political parties they generally fail to represent the social interest e.g.: "*in reality these politicians have no real love for [our] country!*" "*They just love themselves*!" (Respondent 5).

Results also indicate that there are no civil society groups that are committed to a functioning government. E.g.: "*People get into power and the work that was in progress is cancelled in the earlier stages.*" (Respondent 8:3). A possible explanation to this phenomenon is the economic migration and the small scale of the island, e.g.: "when it [involves] economic/touristic oriented developments, we have seen efforts being made by politicians to fulfil these promises (Respondent 3:18). However, when regarding the general integrity of the administration, most respondents indicate a lengthy track record of empty promises which are only made during the election phase. Moreover, it can be said about that there is little (investigative) journalism constantly exposing misconduct on the island, due to limited capacity. This results in "lack of transparency or misinformation which would leave people to be unaware of politicians in Sint Maarten being corrupt" (Respondent 3). However, in some cases, social media interferes in corruption scandals and thus helps to create social awareness to stand against injustice (Respondent 3).

At the very least, there appears to be little political will at island level to strengthen administrative integrity as opposed to hindering it. But it is an issue that has not played an important role in elections on citizens' behalf and the subject has generally not been high on the island's agenda. When the subject was raised, it was usually suggested that it be resolved at a Kingdom level, rather than national. Despite the fact that the party leaders know each other well and are not infrequently related, the relationship between party leaders is usually inimical in nature and tricks are often pulled out to vile or damage opponents. An example of this was given by Respondent 13 who mentioned how a member of parliament hijacked a meeting by refusing to give the word to the opposition. Sandholtz and Koetzle (2000) argues that these types of particularistic politics are bad for economic development, claiming that the problematic socio-economic prospects of large sections of the population hardly improve. As a result, the electorate remains prepared to enter political- paternalist relations, so that political parties that advocate honest governance will not gain a foothold (Sandholtz & Koetzle, 2000).

Administrative culture as a source of negative perception

On Sint Maarten, administrative culture is seen as an integral component of the social culture. Administrative culture is defined as 'informal rules within countries with long traditions of an independent civil service which play an important role in the relationship between politicians and the civil servants.' Administrative culture could possibly affect the nature of this small-island's politics. Polletta (2008) emphasized the impact of personal relationships and rituals of discussion and decision making and argues the importance of studying this. Hence, to understand how and why persons environments leads them to behave in particular ways, it is crucial to consider the social and cultural of their country.

Almost all respondents indicate that it is quite useful to be an ally of a public official, stating that it makes finding work, getting opportunities very easy. This island states are almost universally regarded as the most problematic states in this respect (Veenendaal, 2013). As discussed earlier in the weakness of formal institutions ensures that individual leadership is decisive in political developments in small island societies. The results show that experiences among Sint Maarteners when it comes to the political elite are quite unharmonious but still passively accepted.

Because of the small scale and great social connection, the rivalry and power struggle between party leaders not only influence themselves, but also have direct repercussions for those in the vicinity of politicians. Respondents give examples that party leader seems more important than the party itself as leaders belong to both the economic and political elite. Cini (1997) agreeingly states that the cultural

dimension should be critically considered while trying to understand both how the administration functions internally and how it relates to the general population. Therefore, this report seeks to understand how the acceptance of administrative culture on Sint Maarten and may influence voters in their decision.

The administrative culture of Sint Maarten politics is mainly about personal relationships, but the party leader is the cornerstone of why everything revolves, and the big man who is at the top of the patronage network. There is often a relative overlap between social and professional roles within small-island states. The intermingling of these relationships can cause social roles to become ambiguous thus directly affecting voter judgement (Anderson, Dodd, & Park, 2016; Srebrnik, 2004). This overlap is significant because the decision they make often directly affects the interests of persons with whom they simultaneously have social relationships (Corbett, 2013).Furthermore, respondents are suggesting that in a predominantly hierarchical culture, such as that of Sint Maarten, there is more opportunity for unethical behavior by politicians and directors because there is little control. Because Sint Maarten is no longer under the control of the National Representative, for example, appointments of people who are not capable of a certain position cannot be prevented. Participants have pointed out that this is now 'status quo' when it comes to politics on the island. The small size of the electorate means that island politicians know most voters personally, or at least know which group certain members belong to.

This leads to the phenomenon of overlapping or intersecting roles: a politician has a representative relationship with their constituents, but also has a personal relationship with many voters, for example as a family member, friend, neighbor or wife, member of the same church community, or member of the same sports club. These multiple and overlapping relationships, create a strong mix of private relations and politics, resulting in some policies that are mainly aimed at benefitting parties of personal relationships and vice versa. And if change is desired, islands need separate treatment to promote fairness because they are remote, small-scale, isolated, and close-knit. Considering this, it is assumed that administrative culture affects organizational efficiency and capability which, thereby, affects good governance (Rameshwor, 2005). Nevertheless, existing national administrative culture does not foster the values of fairness, integrity, transparency and free speech since the main professional culture is depicted by bureaucratic orientation and close in-group orientation (Roitman & Veenendaal. 2016).

§5.3 Limitations of research

As with any scientific research, there are also some limitations that affect the strength of research. First of all, a comment must be made on the generalization of the research results. For this study, a topic list was used to conduct 15 open-ended surveys. By using this method, structure has been applied so that all respondents have completed the same measurements. The respondents come from various age groups and backgrounds, which ensures that the differences and connections between identified during this study are perceived by more than one sub-group within the population. In addition, this diversity between respondents ensures that the results paint a representative picture of good governance perceptions within the small-island state. Yet, this research took place directly after the recent changes in government at the beginning of 2020. For example, several candidates have had exposure with the public, which may have had an effect on respondents' true perceptions . For this reason, the research at another time may could produce different results regarding the perception of good governance. On this basis, the external validity in this study is minimal, because the research focuses specifically on Sint Maarten and it can be argued that, the results would be more or less the same and that the results of this study would be valid. The situations regarding the small island state is quite unique and have little to no international counterparts. In regard to outcomes, in addition, the number of respondents to this survey is limited, with 15 respondents interviewed for this study. In order to increase generalizability for larger small-island states, more respondents from different should therefore be involved.

Next, more honest and uncensored information could probably have been collected during interviews conducted in the field. This could have strengthened the research, since, for example, being there offers a powerful opportunity for gaining insights into the nature of human affairs in all their rich complexity (Babbie 2010:327). More specifically, this case in particular would have been strengthened by fieldwork, because less literature is available online about the island than for most countries and the main way of gathering information on Sint Maarten is through local broadcasts.

As a result of the due to the data collection choice, people with lower education levels were indirectly excluded from participating. As most nationals on Sint Maarten mainly have a high school level education or lower, the task of filling in a 22 open ended questionnaire was quite intimidating and tiresome to the average person. However, in an attempt to reduce this, both participants conducted their survey in the form of a structured interview to allow them to express themselves to their full capability. In this respect, the respondent's group of this study could be a limitation by the way they are contacted. The initial idea was to gather all respondents by writing them directly, only five few responded to this. The other respondents were then obtained collect snowball sampling. This means that respondents suggested further people who they think would provide an unbiased opinion (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Consequently, majority of respondents are individuals who are interested in politics, with only a few admitting that they aren't that much involved. Despite this, what has emerged in the results is that respondents have given both positive and negatively charged answers. It can be seen from this that the respondents are not limited to a purely positive perceptions and that therefore several perspectives have been discussed in the study.

§5.4 Practical implications of results

The original intention behind this research, was to serve as a source of knowledge that will eventually inspire Sint Maarten locals to assume their citizens power in democracy. This change intervention was carried as graduation requirement for the honors bachelor 'Processes of Change. This study is named: *Putting the 'Demos' back in democracy: Helping citizens of Sint Maarten realize their power in shaping the small-state political environment.* The main change objectives of this intervention two change objectives have been identified.

1) *After 2 weeks of the final intervention citizens of Sint Maarten should become more aware of their true power within their democracy.* ★★
2) After participating in three rounds of the intervention there is an increase in sense of urgency for long-term change amongst citizens of Sint Maarten. ★★
       ★★ Guidelines of the honors project disregard the main element of measurement within the change objectives, given the small-scale nature of this project.

 To measure whether the change objectives of this study were indeed a longitudinal study was carried out. The benefits and strength of longitudinal research were already demonstrated by Campbell and Stanley in 1966. In contrast to empirical research in which social phenomena are approached from a more "static" perspective, longitudinal research is based on the dynamics and complexity of social change, which best fits the goals of this research. This can be apparent since this research methodology is used in a variety of disciplines: economics (currency developments), medicine (disease spread), planning (traffic jams) and criminology (victim trends).

Over the course of 6 weeks, 8 Sint Maarteners over the age of 18 will participate in a longitudinal intervention. Furthermore, these participants are all required to have participated in at least 3 elections in the last decade. The research design consists of a moderated group discussion and a pre-, interim-, and posttest. This research reveals several perceptions on the current political climate, these topics are presented as discussion points, during which participants are required to share their personal opinions on them and speculate on why things are currently so. During the primary round of the

intervention an instrument will be filled in prior to the 90-minute group discussion, to properly gauge the participants' initial standpoints. However, this measurement will be distributed after the group discussion in subsequent rounds.

The instrument measures participants' readiness for political change, current views on the situation and their general standpoint on whether the political situation can be fixed., participants are given the same measurement instrument to indicate their readiness for change, current views on the situation and their general standpoint on whether the political situation can be fixed. The main intervention, however, occurs in the interim round, during which respondents will receive a summary of the scientific findings of this study which explains the in seriousness of the matter in a popularized way. The main goals will be met once the participants gradually record a greater level of urgency to see a change in Sint Maarten's politics. The intervention will be deemed as successful once change is maintained over the course of time.

§5.5 Recommendations for future research

Regarding future research, is quite interesting that Sint Maarten and the French part of the island of Saint Martin have hardly been examined in comparative perspective. A comparative study of the development of the integrity system of the Dutch and French parts might provide other insights into the functioning and strengthening of the integrity systems. The French part is directly covered by French law and regulations and has a different development dynamic of the integrity system.

Next, Dutch overseas territories have a close relationship with the United Kingdom than the Caribbean. It is therefore advisable, in comparison, to examine the three overseas territories Guadeloupe, the Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands in a comparative perspective with islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This will provide a better understanding of attaining good governance and the strengthening of the functioning of the integrity systems. This study took advantage of social institutionalism. This thesis research states that unspoken social mechanisms play a significant role in impacting the political climate. For a subsequent study, it might be interesting to use historical institutionalism, or the integrity standards of new idea turn out to be 'normalization'. To what extent it is a strong link between these concepts is difficult to figure out after conducting this study. This requires more research.

A next point for consideration would be to analyze if there is a difference in significance given to different principles by citizens. Without any preparation, guidance and hesitation, almost the same amount of importance is given to, but it may be interesting to investigate whether participatory governance or lawfulness are the main elements of achieving good governance. In addition, researchers should also investigate the usefulness and necessity of the principles in action. This would be interesting because citizens indicate to be prepared to make decisions and bring out prosperity. In this way, it can be practically concluded which principle holds more precedence over the other, to really obtain good governance All in all, it can be said that investigations into good governance within small island states are far from complete. It is a complex and dynamic issue on which many directors and policy makers will continue to use their brains. In addition, more and more scientific research is being carried out on this subject and the theme from different disciplines is being approached.
.

§5.6 Closing statement

This research has sought insights about the alignment between principles of good governance and daily practices . From a varying view of small-state politics in terms of good governance from the scientific literature, the exploratory research shows that there is still quite a way to go if Sint Maarten wants to be considered a small–island state with good governance. The current research will hopefully help to provide a clearer picture of what developing democracies looks like, albeit on a rather small scale. I hope the

readers from other small–island states will be inspired to take a critical look at how political issues truly effect the prosperity of their country.

Within the Sint Maarten government in 2010 there was clearly hope that the constitutional establishment would lead to a stronger public administration. Yet, the questionnaire responses have revealed that this hope has certainly not yet come true and leaves the question of whether this will happen in the future. However, as the title of this research 'Tis so politics here does go' it shows that while small–island democracies have received much criticism in literature, there is always a degree of national pride that disallows locals from ever turning their back against their democratic system, and their country.

6. Literature list

Aguilera, R. V., & Cuervo-Cazurra, A. (2009). Codes of Good Governance. *Corporate Governance: An International Review, 17*(3), 376–387. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8683.2009.00737.x

Anckar, D. (2002). Why are small Island States Democracies? *The Round Table, 91*(365), 375–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/0035853022000010344

Askarov, Z., & Doucouliagos, H. (2015). Development Aid and Growth in Transition Countries. *World Development, 66*, 383–399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.08.014

Babbie, E. (2014). *The Practice of Social Research* (14th ed.). Cengage Learning, Inc.

Bashir, O. S. (2015). Testing Inferences about American Politics: A Review of the "Oligarchy" Result. *Research & Politics, 2*(4), 205316801560889. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168015608896

Beitz, C. R. (2011). *The Idea of Human Rights* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.

Benedicto, J. (2013). The political cultures of young people: an uncertain and unstable combinatorial logic. *Journal of Youth Studies, 16*(6), 712–729. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2012.744812

Bhargava, P. (2018). Oligarchy and Democracy: Trade-Offs for the Political Elite. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3204501

Boeije, H. (2014). *Analysis in Qualitative Research*. SAGE Publications.

Bourguignon, F., & Verdier, T. (2000). Oligarchy, democracy, inequality and growth. *Journal of Development Economics, 62*(2), 285–313. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0304-3878(00)00086-9

Burnside, C., & Dollar, D. (1997). Aid spurs growth-in a sound policy environment. *Finance and Development, 34*, 4-7.

Camelia, G., Richards, F., & Bot, T. (2015). *Infrastructuur corruptiebestrijding op Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba Inspectieonderzoek van de Raad voor de rechtshandhaving.* https://www.raadrechtshandhaving.com

Campling, L., & Rosalie, M. (2006). Sustaining social development in a small island developing state? The case of Seychelles. *Sustainable Development, 14*(2), 115–125. https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.298

Cassinelli, C. W. (1953). The Law of Oligarchy. *American Political Science Review, 47*(3), 773–784. https://doi.org/10.2307/1952904

Castells, M. (2008). The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616*(1), 78–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311877

Cini, M. (1997). Administrative Culture in the European Commission: The Cases of Competition and Environment. *At the Heart of the Union*, 71–88. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25791-1_4

Coetzee, T. (2017, July 19). *The effectiveness of development aid in Lesotho for good governance and political transformation.* Kovsie Scholar. https://scholar.ufs.ac.za/xmlui/handle/11660/6495

Colebatch, H. K. (2014). Making sense of governance. *Policy and Society, 33*(4), 307–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2014.10.001

Coller, X., & Cordero, G. (2018). The Iron Law of Oligarchy and New Ways of Selecting Candidates. *Democratizing Candidate Selection*, 273–288. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76550-1_12

Corbett, J. (2013). "Everybody knows everybody": practising politics in the Pacific Islands. *Democratization*, *22*(1), 51–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.811233

Couteur, A. L., & Gardner, F. (2008). Use of Structured Interviews and Observational Methods in Clinical Settings. *Rutter's Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 269–288. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444300895.ch19

Dahl, R. A. (1989). *Democracy and Its Critics*. Amsterdam University Press.

de los Reyes, G., & Martin, K. E. (2016). Is Contracting Around Lawful Opportunism an Option? *Academy of Management Proceedings*, *2016*(1), 17184. https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2016.17184abstract

DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Marshall, P. L., & McCulloch, A. W. (2010). Developing and Using a Codebook for the Analysis of Interview Data: An Example from a Professional Development Research Project. *Field Methods*, *23*(2), 136–155. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822x10388468

Devaney, L. (2016). Good governance? Perceptions of accountability, transparency and effectiveness in Irish food risk governance. *Food Policy*, *62*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2016.04.003

Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2011). An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *22*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mur011

Ffolkes-Goldson, S. (2015). *Commonwealth Caribbean Corporate Governance*. Taylor & Francis.

Gafni, N., Moshinsky, A., & Kapitulnik, J. (2002, December 30). *A standardized open-ended questionnaire as a substitute for a personal interview in dental admissions. – PubMed – NCBI*. Pubmed.Gov. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12665064

Gerring, J. (2004). What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for? *American Political Science Review*, *98*(2), 341–354. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055404001182

GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences . (2018). *International Social Survey Programme: Role of Government V – ISSP 2016*. [Dataset]. https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13052

Giannone, D. (2010). Political and ideological aspects in the measurement of democracy: the Freedom House case. *Democratization*, *17*(1), 68–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340903453716

Gilens, M., & Page, B. I. (2014). Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens. *Perspectives on Politics*, *12*(3), 564–581. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592714001595

Gläser, J. (2013, March 18). *Life With and Without Coding: Two Methods for Early-Stage Data Analysis in Qualitative Research Aiming at Causal Explanations | Gläser | Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. Qualitative-Research.Net. http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1886

Government of Sint Maarten. (2010, October 10). *Consitution of Sint Maarten*. Sintmaartengov.Org. http://www.sintmaartengov.org/government/AZ/laws/Pages/Constitution.aspx

Gunn, P. (2019). Against Epistocracy. *Critical Review*, *31*(1), 26–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2019.1609842

Hayek, F. A. (2012). *Law, Legislation and Liberty*. Taylor & Francis.

Higley, J., & Best, H. (2009). Democratic Elitism Reappraised. *Comparative Sociology*, *8*(3), 323–344. https://doi.org/10.1163/156913309x447558

Jabbra, J. G., & Dwivedi, O. P. (2004). Globalization, governance, and Administrative Culture. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *27*(13–14), 1101–1127. https://doi.org/10.1081/pad-200039891

Jamil, I., Askvik, S., & Hossain, F. (2013). Understanding Administrative Culture: Some Theoretical and Methodological Remarks. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *36*(13), 900–909. https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2013.837728

Keping, Y. (2017). Governance and Good Governance: A New Framework for Political Analysis. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, *11*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-017-0197-4

Kiewiet, D. R., & Lewis-Beck, M. S. (2011). No man is an island: self-interest, the public interest, and sociotropic voting. *Critical Review*, *23*(3), 303–319. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2011.635868

Lake, D. A. (2010). Rightful Rules: Authority, Order, and the Foundations of Global Governance. *International Studies Quarterly*, *54*(3), 587–613. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2010.00601.x

Leach, D. K. (2005). The Iron Law of What Again? Conceptualizing Oligarchy Across Organizational Forms. *Sociological Theory*, *23*(3), 312–337. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0735-2751.2005.00256.x

Margulis, M. E., McKeon, N., & Borras, S. M. (2013). Land Grabbing and Global Governance: Critical Perspectives. *Globalizations*, *10*(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2013.764151

Minto-Coy, I. D., & Berman, E. (2015). *Public Administration and Policy in the Caribbean*. Taylor & Francis.

Mukhija, V. (2010). N of One plus Some: An Alternative Strategy for Conducting Single Case Research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *29*(4), 416–426. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456x10362770

Otjes, S., Stroebe, K., & Postmes, T. (2019). When Voting Becomes Protest: Mapping Determinants of Collective Action Onto Voting Behavior. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *11*(4), 513–521. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550619872482

Polletta, F. (2008). Culture and Movements. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *619*(1), 78–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716208320042

Rameshwor, D. (2005). *Administrative culture in Nepal: Does it reflect the dominant socio-cultural values of Nepal?* (Master thesis). http://hdl.handle.net/1956/1259

Richardson, H. C. (2020). *How the South Won the Civil War*. Oxford University Press.

Roitman, J. V. (2016). Land of hope and dreams: slavery and abolition in the Dutch Leeward islands, 1825–1865. *Slavery & Abolition*, *37*(2), 375–398. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039x.2016.1140457

Roitman, J. V., & Veenendaal, W. (2016). *'We Take Care of Our Own': The Origins of Oligarchic Politics in St. Maarten* (No. 102). https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/8146/627aec8fca4aadeb7decbc03241a2f3b24ac.pdf

Rotmeijer, S. (2018). 'Words that work?' Practices of constructive journalism in a local Caribbean context. *Journalism*, *20*(4), 600–616. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918770555

Röttger-Rössler, B., Scheidecker, G., Funk, L., & Holodynski, M. (2015). Learning (by) Feeling: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the Socialization and Development of Emotions. *Ethos*, *43*(2), 187–220. https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12080

Sandholtz, W., & Koetzle, W. (2000). Accounting for Corruption: Economic Structure, Democracy, and Trade. *International Studies Quarterly*, *44*(1), 31–50. https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00147

Scholte, J. A. (2002). Civil Society and Democracy in Global Governance. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, *8*(3), 281–304. https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-00803004

Scholte, J. A. (2019). Civil society and global governance: Exploring transscalar connections. *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, *8*(3), 490–498. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-019-00067-8

Schonfeld, W. R. (1981). Oligarchy and Leadership Stability: The French Communist, Socialist, and Gaullist Parties. *American Journal of Political Science*, *25*(2), 215. https://doi.org/10.2307/2110850

Sevic, Z. (2019, February 18). *Politico-administrative relationships in small states*. University of Malta. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar//handle/123456789/40126

Sjöstedt, M., & Povitkina, M. (2016). Vulnerability of Small Island Developing States to Natural Disasters. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, *26*(1), 82–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/1070496516682339

Sousa, L., de, & Moriconi, M. (2013). Why voters do not throw the rascals out?— A conceptual framework for analysing electoral punishment of corruption. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, *60*(5), 471–502. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-013-9483-5

Srebrnik, H. (2004). Small Island Nations and Democratic Values. *World Development*, *32*(2), 329–341. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2003.08.005

Tucker, A. (2008). Pre-Emptive Democracy: Oligarchic Tendencies in Deliberative Democracy. *Political Studies*, *56*(1), 127–147. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00676.x

Veenendaal, W. (2016a). Smallness and Status Debates in Overseas Territories: Evidence from the Dutch Caribbean. *Geopolitics*, *21*(1), 148–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2015.1104303

Veenendaal, W. (2016b). The Ties that Bind. *New West Indian Guide*, *90*(3–4), 257–279. https://doi.org/10.1163/22134360-09003055

Veenendaal, W. (2018a). Islands of democracy. *Area*, *52*(1), 30–37. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12462

Veenendaal, W. (2018b). When Things Get Personal: How Informal and Personalized Politics Produce Regime Stability in Small States. *Government and Opposition*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2018.30

Veenendaal, W. P. (2013). Democracy in microstates: why smallness does not produce a democratic political system. *Democratization*, *22*(1), 92–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.820710

Veenendaal, W. P., & Corbett, J. (2014). Why Small States Offer Important Answers to Large Questions. *Comparative Political Studies*, *48*(4), 527–549. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414014554687

Weiss, T. G. (2000). Governance, good governance and global governance: Conceptual and actual challenges. *Third World Quarterly*, *21*(5), 795–814. https://doi.org/10.1080/713701075

Wood, T. (2014). Understanding Electoral Politics in Solomon Islands. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2505265

Appendix I : Informed consent and Survey

<div align="center">!!! Please carefully read this text before beginning the survey!!!</div>

Hello!

First and foremost, if you are reading this, I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy during this pandemic.

October 10th, 2020 will mark a decade since the dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles and the birth of the non-sovereign state of Sint Maarten, as it is today. However, in the past nine years, there has not been a sitting of parliament which has lasted the mandated term of four years, resulting in five elections within a rather short time.

With this milestone nearing, it is only fit that citizens of Sint Maarten begin to reflect on what has been achieved since establishing the constitution, to ensure that we are, in fact, always moving forward. So, for my Bachelor thesis assignment, I am conducting a case study, specific to and fully focused on this small-island state. The aim is to reflect on past behavior to provide natives with the information needed to make positive changes on the island.

This research is aimed at gathering your perceptions of political events of country Sint Maarten. Please note: this study is NOT meant to reprimand, expose, ostracize and/or defame any (previously) elected officials. To ensure of this, all the responses we get will be totally anonymous. verbatim will be processed anonymously and any personal data, whether it be of the participant or elected official, will be removed. Furthermore, this research is completely voluntary, responses can be withdrawn at any time the participant sees fit.

Please contact the researcher, Danielle Philipps (d.d.philipps@student.utwente.nl) for any further questions, hesitations or concerns.

This survey will take around 40minutes to complete. I kindly ask you to answer as honestly and clearly as possible; since this method of gathering responses is only fruitful if answers are thoroughly explained. none of us is perfect, and the point of this research is not to judge anyone. I just want to know what you think.

I General perception on political situations → brief measures to gauge the standpoint of respondents

1) **Looking back on the first decade (2010-2020) of country Sint Maarten, what are your thoughts on the political climate of this small-island state?** _Please be specific and motivate your points._

2) **What are specific moments and/or occurrences that have led you to the conclusions of question one?**

3) **Please give detailed response to the following statement:**

(In regard to only politics) "I believe that Sint Maarten will be prosperous if the upcoming decade resembled the previous."

II Perceived Integrity →More positive responses mean citizens find their elected officials to be integral, which means that continuous re-election does not defy this core democratic principle.

4) **To what extent does treatment from public officials depend on who you know?**

5) **How far have elected officials gone to uphold and fulfill any promises made during their campaign?**
"
6) **Do you believe that (previously) elected officials are unwilling to influence important decisions (concerning Sint Maarten) in favor of pleasing other people who may or may not benefit from the outcome?**

7) **Please give an elaborate reaction to the following statement:**

'All politicians on Sint Maarten are corrupt, so it does not matter whom you vote for since there are no "clean" alternatives.'

8) **Please speculate on how you believe that *others* may respond to the previous statement (see question 7)**

III Presence of Oligarchy on SXM → Positive responses means that SXM'ers are aware of the recurrences of the ongoing oligarchy (important key in making change possible)

9) **How would you explain the reelection of certain parliamentarians despite the general public being well informed about their wrongdoings?** *This is based solely on your opinion, there are no wrong answers.*

10) **To what extent do you believe that there has been enough change in the political arena over the last 9 years?** (E.g.: *the emergence of new parties or candidates*)

11) **Do you believe the new parties/candidates have an equal chance at securing the main executive functions** (e.g.: parliamentarians, prime minister, etc.)? *Please motivate your answer*

12) **React to the following statement:**

"*I believe that at least 80% of the elected officials during the past 9 years were the best-suited people to fulfill their respective dutie*s."

13) ***To what extent do you believe that you have much say in the future of the country?***

14) **To what extent do you believe that average citizen has considerable influence on politics?**

IV Perception on administrative culture causing oligarchy→ Negative results mean that they value self-fulfillment above any democratic ethical standard, such as integrity, transparency or even legality;

15) **To what extent do you believe that being a direct beneficiary (=ally) of elected officials, benefits one's prospects on the island?**

16) **React to the following statement:**

"If the candidate's involvement in future politics determined the fulfillment of my interests and basic needs, I would be willing to re-elect them."

17) **Please speculate on how you believe that *others* may respond to the previous statement (see question 17)**

18) **To what extent was/were your decision(s) in the past 7 parliamentarian elections free of any external influence?** (family loyalty, coercion, bribery, persuasion, social desirability, intimidation, etc.)

19) **Please speculate on the extent to which you believe that voting decisions of the general population are free of any external influence?**

20) **What are other important points for consideration regarding Sint Maarten's political climate that are perhaps overlooked in this questionnaire?**

Appendix II: Proof of ethical approval by BMS Faculty

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

FACULTY BMS

200655 REQUEST FOR ETHICAL REVIEW

Request nr:	200655
Researcher:	Philipps, D.D.
Supervisor:	Vuuren, H.A. van
Reviewer:	Galetzka, M.
Status:	Approved by commission
Version:	2

1. START

A. TITLE AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1. What is the title of the research project? (max. 100 characters)

   Citizens perceptions of oligarchic tendencies of microstates

2. In which context will you conduct this research?

   Bachelor's Thesis

3. Date of the application

   22-04-2020

5. Is this research project closely connected to a research project previously assessed by the BMS Ethics Committee?

   No/Unknown

B. CONTACT INFORMATION

6. Contact information for the lead researcher

   6a. Initials:

   D.D.

   6b. Surname:

   Philipps

   6c. Education/Department (if applicable):

   B-COM

   6d. Staff or Student number:

   1806645

   6e. Email address:

   d.d.philipps@student.utwente.nl

   6f. Telephone number (during the research project):

Appendix III: Final coding scheme

Main Theme	Sub theme (codes)	Descriptors	Source of Data
Political climate	Positive standpoint	Optimism, hope, no concern, acceptance.	Q1 – Q7, Q9-Q12, Q18-Q20
	Neutral standpoint	Some concern, indifference, contentment.	
	Negative standpoint	Disappointment, anger, highly concerned.	
	Awareness	Motivated opinion, examples.	
	Unawareness	Inability to name situation, inability to answer, lack of example	
	Positive sentiment	Hope, optimism, joy, trust, Complacency	
	Neutral sentiment		
	Negative sentiment	Anger, distrust, frustration, disbelief, desperate, pessimism	
Integrity	High politician integrity	Fairness, equality, democratic values, unbiased, honesty, trust	Q4 – Q8, Q20
	Low Politician integrity	Partiality, misleading, deception, empty promises, corruption	
	High administration integrity	Transparency, goal actualization, helpful, contributes to public welfare	
	Low administration integrity	Ambiguous, Not meeting KPI's, nefarious, unhelpful.	
	Negative personal belief	Inevitable corruption, distrust in system, disappointment, anger	
	Positive personal belief	Hopefulness, belief in a just system, optimism.	
	Negative subjective norm	Inevitable corruption, out-group homogeneity, disappointment	
	Positive subjective norm	Birg-ing, optimism, hope, implying multiple opinions of outgroup, trust.	

Presence of Oligarchy	Fair democracy	Represents populum, fair elections, complying with law, parliamentary turn over, uncorrupt, new parties, interest group involvement, equal opportunity, objective, ethical.	Q2, Q7 – Q14
	Flawed democracy	Not representative, election tampering, lack of turnover, corruptions, gatekeeping, self-interest, lack of opportunity, subjectivity, unethical.	
	Positive experience	Acceptance, happiness, joy, agreement, usefulness.	
	Neutral experience	Compliance, indifference, non-Chalant	
	Negative experience	Anger, despair, hopelessness, need for change, pessimism	
Administrative culture influence	Effect of administrative culture	Voter loyalty, willing to reap ally benefits, biased candidate selection, subject to coercion.	Q15 – Q19 Q9
	No effect of administrative culture	Unbiased voting, denying ally benefits, objective candidate selection, no coercion.	
	Some causation		
	Positive action (personal)	In line with democratic values	
	Negative action (personal)	Against democratic values	
	Positive action (general)	In line with democratic values	
	Negative action (general)	Against democratic values	

Appendix IV: Systematic search for literature

Date	Source? Database (db), Book (b), Internet (url)	Search terms and strategies (Search profile incl. Boolean operators)	How many hits (how many relevant)	Related terms/authors	Notes
03/11/'19	Google.com	Microstructures governance	560.000 (all hits were irrelevant)		Too broad, gives results which mainly relates to physics topics
03/11/19	GoogleScholar	Microstructure governance NOT physics	2.260 – 2 partially relevant hits but still too many articles related to physics	'governance' 'management'	The term 'microsystem' is very scientific and is better left out of the search query
19/12/19	Scopus (db)	microstructur★ AND government AND not AND politic★	1 hit (wow!) –→ This is way too specific		Maybe I will drop the politics Boolean because it makes it too narrow.
02/01/20	JSTOR	microstate★ and policy	320 → After initial scan I found at least 4 relevant sources, but more detailed scan is needed		
02/01/20	JSTOR	pluralistic ignorance politi★	2472→ however I filtered results for 'anthropology', 'political science' and	'public opinion' '	Very interesting articles for my theoretical framework and to help me

				'public policy administration' and narrowed it to 527		*develop my instrument.*