



The Westminster Model and the Destabilizing of Democracy in the Caribbean Executive Summary

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Dissertation Executive Summary
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Studying Westminster is essential for creating social change in the region.

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Cover Photo: Seamen’s Hospital Booklet from about the early 1900s

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<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/vndmmcqz/images?id=udpn2x76>. Front cover of Seamen's hospital booklet: Illustration: “An empire on which the sun never sets:” including all crests of British colonies: Australia, Canada, India, Fiji, etc. Seamen’s Hospital booklet Published: Artist Unknown

The West Indies Colonial Crest is located in the lower left of the image.

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Abstract

The problem with the Westminster model is the model's lack of governance, oversight and colonial mindset which has led to a crisis that includes severe government corruption, deepening poverty, upticks in crime, debt and decreasing trade opportunities. This makes life harder for the citizens and threatens to destabilize the democracies with no one nation situated to cope with these existential challenges. National independence for the region was designed to maintain the status quo of colonial times while providing the illusion of autonomy and individual sovereignty. The purpose of the study was to analyze the Westminster model enacted in the Caribbean Commonwealth, assess the viability of the model in Saint Lucia, and identify areas that may improve the social and economic conditions for the people in the region. The theoretical framework for the study used the political constitutional theory to define the limits of governments power, and Caribbean dependency theory which focused on ending the external controls that countries have over the internal development of Caribbean countries. A qualitative document content analysis used with deductive data content analysis method to examine publicly available documents to examine how the framework and implementation of the Westminster model create enabling conditions for corruption, debt, and poverty in Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth Caribbean. The study findings revealed stagnant outdated constitutions, mired in colonial times with countries still bearing allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II. Constitutional reforms were recommended to address the challenges the region faces. Studying Westminster was essential for creating positive social change through a reformative social movement that seeks to change how society functions.

Key Words

Westminster Model; Commonwealth Caribbean; COVID-19; colonialism; constitutional reform; democracy; corruption; governance; poverty; debt; crime

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Introduction

The Westminster model is the parliamentary system of government established in the former British colonies upon gaining independence from the United Kingdom. The model is based on the British constitution and their Westminster government. The model has been credited for bringing stable governments to the former colonies. The problem with the Westminster model in its current form is its lack of proper governance and oversight. It still maintains a colonial mindset that has led to a crisis in the region over the past two decades. This includes severe government corruption, deepening poverty, upticks in crime, debt, and decreasing trade opportunities, making life harder for the region's citizens under the Westminster model. The customary way of conceptualizing the Westminster model is to view it as a democratic parliamentary system of government, influenced by the British system of government. Scholars who study parliamentary systems such as Dag Anckar, Matthew Louis Bishop, Norman Girvan, Cynthia Barrow-Giles, and Kate Quinn, whose ideas were explored in this Executive Summary, are familiar with the term Westminster model, widely used in academic and practitioner literature.

When Trinidad and Tobago gained their independence from the United Kingdom (UK) on August 1, 1962, closely followed by Jamaica on August 6, 1962, both former colonies were ceded the Westminster model by the United Kingdom, their former colonizers. The model at the time was conceptualized as “members of the family” of Westminster. However, compared to Westminster in the UK, the model bears more family resemblance than family members. Many scholars attempted to precisely define what the Westminster model in the Caribbean means; however, in doing so, the class of scholars created muddled and confusing attributes as to a precise definition of the model. According to Russell and Serban (2020),

...on examination, it no longer meets even the – relatively weak – requirements for family resemblance. To end the muddle and the risk of flawed inferences and false generalization, comparative scholars should drop this term and select cases based on more precise attributes instead. (p. 1)

To understand why Westminster should be dropped, comparative politics must be defined. Scholars such as the late Jamaican economist Norman Girvan, Professor Emeritus and Professorial Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations, The University of the West Indies, who wrote extensively throughout his career about some of the adverse effects of the Westminster model and all its trappings of the colonial past, never precisely defined the model. Girvan was very critical of the Westminster model and saw it as “part of a larger ‘independence pact’ designed to maintain the status quo in the English-speaking Caribbean and assesses the major challenges facing the region today” (Girvan, 2015 p.1). The first attempt at defining the

model was by Stanley Alexander De Smith in 1961 and 1964. De Smith outlined his view of the Westminster model as follows:

a constitutional system in which the head of state is not the effective head of government; in which the effective head of government is a Prime minister presiding over a Cabinet composed of Ministers over whose appointment and removal he has at least a substantial measure of control; in which the effective executive branch of government is parliamentary in as much as Ministers must be members of the legislature; and in which Ministers are collectively and individually responsible to a freely elected and representative legislature. (Bishop, 2010, p. 422)

This form of government is in place in the Commonwealth Caribbean, former British colonies that are now independent nations in the British Commonwealth Realm (Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, and the Grenadine, Trinidad, and Tobago), is based on the British Westminster government; however, something has gone slightly off track with how it is implemented in these island nations, when compared to Westminster in the United Kingdom, or Canada and Australia, for example. This Westminster model has a strong executive, the Prime minister, in which almost all power lies.

The primary reason why consensual governments are not present in the Commonwealth Caribbean is that Westminster is a majoritarian, parliamentary form of government. Nine of the 12 Commonwealth nations have a government where the executive is accountable to their Cabinet of Ministers. The latter are appointed to the cabinet by the head of government. The only exception where the people directly elect the leader of the government is in Dominica, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago; their original constitution was changed to provide for direct elections of their head of state.

While it may not be feasible for these nations to abandon Westminster altogether, constitutional reform represents one possible avenue that could be enacted to bring these countries more in line with how a truly democratic representative government works. "The result is that constitutional reforms have been conservative with a small 'c,' directed toward perfecting the system by preserving its essence intact" (Sutton, 1999, p. 69). Constitutional reforms in the region continue to be a challenge, and there is no mechanism to drive this process since it is a process that is, again, in the hands of the Prime minister. The challenge for social change in the region is that change in the Westminster model, drawing heavily from the colonial past, fails to locate power in the hands of the people. Since sitting members of the parliaments are unlikely to propose institutional changes that will threaten or reduce the power, finding a mechanism for constitutional reform may be the chief catalyst for a social change in the English-speaking

Caribbean. Chief among these catalysts will be fully operational integrity commissions to identify and root out government corruption on all levels.

Background

From a panoramic 10,000-foot view, islands of the Caribbean Community present a picture of thriving and maturing democracies, with bustling metropolitan cities. However, when making a deeper analysis into the region, a different, more alarming image emerges. "...beneath the surface, there is a strong undercurrent of corruption, lack of transparency and persistent democratic deficits that continue to pose a challenge for the post-independent state" (Barrow-Giles, 2011 p. 287).

Figure 1 Background of the Study



The root of systemic corruption in the Caribbean can be directly linked to political parties winning huge, lopsided majorities in Parliament. In the 1997 general election in Saint Lucia, The Saint Lucia Labour Party won 16 of the 17 seats in Parliament, leaving an opposition of one in

Parliament. In the 2001 general election, the Saint Lucia Labour Party won 14 of 17 seats, leaving the opposition party with three representatives in Parliament: both are examples of heavily skewed parliaments, which created an air of invincibility for the majority, with little or no level of scrutiny to their policies, no accountability, unchecked powers, produced opportunities for government corruption.

Corruption has been an issue in the Commonwealth Caribbean since the first colonies, Jamaica (August 6, 1962) and Trinidad and Tobago (August 31, 1962), were granted independence from the United Kingdom. They inherited the UK's democratic regimes and governmental institutions by almost acclamation. The consensus is that there is a need for either serious reform of the Westminster model or to abandon this form of government and institute a more democratic form of government that will more convincingly guarantee and protect civil rights and liberties.

The majority of the scholars called for a change in the governments of these Caribbean island nations, and the chief critic and the loudest anti-Westminster voice was Professor Norman Girvan. He was among the earliest critics of the shortcomings of the Westminster model. Girvan (2015) viewed this model more as an

“independence pact” used by the British government to maintain the old colonial ties: the laws, the traditions, and way of life while giving the appearance of independence to the former Caribbean colonies.

Due to the small geographic size of these nations, the ruling class and the elites all know each other, allowing them to direct how resources and financial assets are allocated and who gains and, more importantly, remain in power. Not only are all politics local, but they are also highly personal.

Problem Statement

The problem with the Westminster model in its current form, though credited for bringing stable government to the former colonies, is its lack of governance oversight and still maintains a colonial mindset that has led to a crisis in the region over the past two years decades. This includes severe government corruption, deepening poverty, upticks in crime, debt, and decreasing trade opportunities, making life harder for the region's citizens under the Westminster model.

English-speaking British colonies that gained their independence from The United Kingdom between 1962 and 1980, specifically the twelve nations that form the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), adopted the British Westminster form of government known as the Westminster model. National independence for the region was designed to maintain the status quo of colonial times while providing the illusion of autonomy and individual sovereignty. Now, over 50 years after independence for these former colonies, the region faces some threats such as deep government corruption, high crime rates, drug trafficking, increasing poverty, barriers to proper

healthcare, and climate change threatens to destabilize the democracies with no one nation situated to cope with these existential challenges.

A growing number of scholars such as Dag Anckar, Matthew Louis Bishop, the late Norman Girvan, Cynthia Barrow-Giles, and Paul K. Sutton have stated that the Westminster government, given to the former British colonies, have produced, perhaps, many harmful effects that could only be addressed through the process of constitutional reform. One scholar, Richard Albert, openly invites scholars of comparative public law in a 2017 journal article to look at constitutionalism in the Caribbean region and go beyond the few nations that are constantly studied. There is a tremendous gap in the research literature regarding the Caribbean, which provides scholars an abundance of riches to perform comparative studies in the Commonwealth. Albert (2017) observed that

“...many still today governed by the same constitution imposed by their colonizers” (p. 3).

After decades of independence under Westminster, what has resulted in the inability to guarantee and protect basic tenants of democracy, with nations not adequately equipped to deal with systemic issues, such as ongoing degeneration of their environments and shrinking economic growth that permeates the entire region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative document analysis study was to investigate publicly available documents, including government documents, to examine colonialism and its lasting effects on Saint Lucia and the former Caribbean colonies. Bowen (2009) argued that the rationale for document analysis is based on its role in methodological and data triangulation, the enormous value of documents in research, and its practicality as a standalone method for particular forms of qualitative research. Through a document analysis of publicly available documents, I specifically concentrated on the impact of the Westminster model on issues of corruption, debt, and poverty in Saint Lucia.

Figure 2 Key Phenomenon Investigated



The key concept or phenomenon investigated was colonialism and its lingering effects on Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Duncan and Woods (2007) observed that these Anglo-Caribbean democracies, despite poverty, violence, drug trafficking, and corruption, have remained resilient in the face of these challenges.

A glaring limitation of Westminster is its inability to divorce itself from its slavery and colonial past. Much of the islands in the Commonwealth Caribbean are still governed by laws and a system deeply steeped in colonial history, which brings to light the problem caused by Westminster: attempting to govern in the modern era with a system based on ills of slavery and brutal colonial masters

Research Question

Figure 3 The Research Question



RQ

How does the framework and implementation of the Westminster model create enabling conditions for corruption, debt and poverty in the Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth Caribbean?

Theoretical Framework

Two theories were used to support my study: the political constitutional theory and the Caribbean dependency theory (CDT). The political constitutional theory has some of its origins in Carl Schmitt's work. He viewed the state almost as absolute and the source of constituent power that cannot be constrained also stating that

“a nation is, then, not the electorate confined by the constitution to its role in a representative democracy or a political community constrained by the terms of its covenant. But neither is it a constitutionally unframed source of crude popular power”
(Minkinen, 2013, p. 590).

Schmitt saw the nation as a democratic institution requiring no more than political awareness to utilize its power to reconstruct itself should that be its desire. He stated that a constitution could standardize formal processes by creating norms and the political principles that norms had to adhere to gain validity. In the positive sense, the constitution originates from an act of constitution-making power. Establishing a constitution as such involves not separate sets of norms. Instead, it determines the entirety of the political unity regarding its peculiar form of existence through a single decision instance.

The CDT created a Caribbean-centered cosmology and theory of society derived from the historical study: epistemic decolonization of the Caribbean region. The problems stemming from the lack of development in the area were linked to epistemic dependence, the reliance of regional elites on imported ideas, and concepts of little to no significance to the actual conditions in the nations in the Caribbean. CDT's primary focus was ending the external controls over countries' internal development imposed by governments, mainly the United Kingdom, whose primary purpose was to enforce neocolonial political structures. Collier (2002), in questioning why Caribbean nations had not achieved a high level of economic growth and development, the author noted that Caribbean countries saw the root of their economic development problems in their legacies of imperialism and slavery. The author viewed the dependency theory as key to answering the questions of stagnant economic growth in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a qualitative document analysis of publicly available documents. Document analysis as a research method is principally applicable to qualitative studies and content analysis. It is appropriate for creating rigorous studies that make prolific descriptions of a phenomenon and event. Qualitative research designs produce results that will “tell a story” of how the analysis of Westminster could lead to a better standard of living, social and economic, in Saint Lucia and the region. Further, this research design could produce a narrative to address or

provide answers to problems such as corruption, debt, and poverty that have plagued the Commonwealth Caribbean for over 50 years after independence.

Document analysis is a systematic method of qualitative research by which documents, including public records, personal documents, physical documents (posters, flyers, handbooks) are reviewed or evaluated by the researcher to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic; it is a growing process focused on a search for essential meanings, themes, and patterns, instead of a strict set of procedures with constricting parameters. Data is examined in this method to interpret meaning, increase understanding and create empirical knowledge.

Scope and Delimitations

Constitutional reform is the specific aspect of the research problem that was addressed because several islands in the past 10 years have commissioned constitutional reform studies to ascertain the feasibility of making changes to their country's constitution. Constitutional reform, if enacted, could be one possible way to address the research question. Thomas Jefferson once said that the dead should not govern the living. He noted that constitutions should be replaced roughly every 20 years to support his idea.

“Jefferson famously calculated...and argued for constitutional replacement every 19 years so that each generation could determine its own fundamental rules” (Ginsburg, Dixon, 2011, p. 113).

In Jefferson's view, periodical review and reexamination of the core principles that govern the country will keep the citizens fully engaged in the political process; it would call keep the constitutions fresh and allow the citizens to participate in the process self-governance.

The one document that binds Saint Lucia and the other countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean is their constitution, which are essentially carbon copies of each other. Barrow-Giles (2010) stated that it is instructive to note that the constitutions of Caribbean independent states were primarily produced by British civil servants at Whitehall, with little input from the Caribbean public.

Literature Review

The problem with the Westminster model, though credited for bringing stable government to the former colonies, is that it lacks proper governance oversight and still maintains a colonial mindset, leading to a crisis in the region over the past two decades. The purpose of this qualitative document content analysis study is to identify and analyze the elements that influence the implementation of the Westminster model of government and its effects on the social and economic conditions in Saint Lucia. The prime minister rules only if their party has a majority in

the House of Assembly (the House). With the majority in the House, the ruling party is free to enact legislation that they deem appropriate given that 100% of the majority will always vote for their leader's legislative agenda. There is something concerning about a democratic form of government in which the victor gets all the spoils in national elections. The Westminster model places excessive power in the hands of the Prime minister and their Cabinet and removes any appearance of parliamentary democracy.

“Government officials can circumvent the laws that they have enacted. They can use public resources for their personal gain...As a result, when a party is elected to power, it virtually eliminates the opposition through patronage, control of the media, and legislative action where necessary,” (Hinds, 2008 p. 396).

It has been difficult for the former British colonies to break the chains of their colonial past completely. Nothing exemplifies this than the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (Privy Council), located in the United Kingdom, vs. The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Scholars are puzzled why the majority of the former colonies who gained their full independence from the United Kingdom still prefer the Privy Council as their court of final appeal.

“This, it is argued, represents the ‘essential last rite of passage to true nationhood and self-determination’ and the continuing presence of the Privy Council in the judicature of the countries represents an...abdication of a fundamental aspect of our sovereignty” (Barrow-Giles, 2010 p. 17).

Of the 12 countries that comprise the Commonwealth Caribbean, only Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, and Jamaica utilizes the CCJ. Colonialism came into the region and decimated the local culture of the Caribbean, including the annihilation of the indigenous peoples such as the Carib Indians and the Arawak. Colonialization forced a foreign way of life, including rules, laws, and morals, upon the people of the Caribbean, which still permeates the people's psyche over 50 years after independence.

A majoritarian system of democracy exists in Saint Lucia and the Caribbean, complimented by authoritarian rule. Suppose majoritarian democracy allows the government in power to rule all aspects of decision and policy-making. In that case, authoritarianism gives the prime minister the muscle needed to implement these decisions and policies with impunity. The Westminster model and its governance in the region have, among other things, led to almost complete control of society by members of the elite political class. The result was the institutionalization of and the

bitter division and polarization of the electorate, drawn down ethnic and tribal (hostile political) lines.

“Having inherited an authoritarian state and system of governance at the time of independence, these countries, singularly and collectively, have been unable to transform these inherited institutions into instruments of mass empowerment and shared nationhood” (Hinds, 2008, p.403).

Having learned from the authoritarian regimes that governed the Caribbean colonies till the 1940s, it is easy to see how and why these new authoritarian leaders exploit the weaknesses of the democratic systems via populist themes, patriotism, nationalism, manufactured crisis, and carefully crafted diversions to maintain their grip on power.

A growing number of scholars believe that the Westminster government, given to the former British colonies, have produced, perhaps, many harmful effects that could only be addressed through the process of constitutional reform. Further, the same consensus, particularly in the last 10 years, observed that almost every island in the Commonwealth Caribbean has embarked on historical processes of constitutional reforms to address, in some way, the shortfalls of Westminster in the Caribbean. Other agreement among the scholars includes a desire to see more substantial reforms in civil rights and liberties, which are tenants of democracy. One scholar, Richard Albert, openly invites scholars of comparative public law in a 2017 journal article to look at constitutionalism in the Caribbean region and go beyond the few nations that are constantly studied. There is a tremendous gap in the research literature regarding the Caribbean, which provides scholars an abundance of riches to perform comparative studies in the Commonwealth.

While this is literature describing the need to reform or remove this form of government in the Caribbean, research indicates that there is not, in fact, a large body of research into the Westminster model since its implementation almost 50 years. Research on the Westminster model conducted in the late 1980s and 1990s focused on the democratic premise of this model, and the conclusion was that Westminster produced a stabilizing effect on the region. However, this that time, many scholars have pointed out that “globalization, the transnational drugs trade, rising crime levels, debt, economic and environmental vulnerability all pose significant threats to Caribbean sovereignty and the power of the state...” (Quinn, 2015, p. 2).

Natasha T. Duncan and Dwayne Woods’ research was simply intended to provide additional and contribute to the scarce literature on democratization and the tenacity of democratic regimes in the Caribbean. Duncan and Woods (2007) observed that “Among developing countries, the Caribbean is home to the largest cluster of democracies. Moreover, the Caribbean region has the longest-lasting set of sustained democracies – from independence to the present – among former.” The Caribbean basin has been largely ignored when it comes to democratization

literature. Instead, much of the studies have focused on Latin America, with the Caribbean often being lumped in the Latin experience.

Anckar (2011) gave the staunchest support for colonialism and how it relates to stable democracies in the Commonwealth Caribbean than any of his scholarly counterparts, observing that

“it appears to be the case that the longer a present country spent as a British colony, the better the prospects for this country to adapt and internalize a democratic code and culture” (p. 69).

Anckar (2011) correctly states that while the sun has set on the British Empire, Westminster is alive and very well. Hundreds of years of colonial rule create “mini-UKs” throughout the land, leaving a lasting historical governmental stamp on its former possessions; after all, Westminster is the United Kingdom, carefully sculpted out of British politics and political thought.

Girvan uses the ill effects of the independence pact as an example of Jamaica’s march for independence. Jamaican Independence Pact was very accurate for the entire British Caribbean as other colonies that sought and gained independence after Jamaica. The main concern for the British and their colonies’ requests for independence was to avoid anti-colonial uprisings that would take the form of revolutions against British rule. So, independence and that aid the British provided the former colonies craft their constitutions was more of a psychological self-emancipation of the colonized people and transformed colonial rule's institutions and structures into an illusion of independence and self-rule.

The consensus on the Westminster model over the last five years remains consistent with the research and conclusions in the prior five to eight years. One of the most significant concerns for the Caribbean is its relationship with the United Kingdom (UK) post Brexit.

Figure 4 Brexit, A Gap in Knowledge



While Brexit may present an opportunity for the UK to reengage with the Commonwealth Caribbean fully, what is concerning is the level of benefits the former colonies can receive from the European Union (EU) now that their chief champion, the UK, will no longer be a member of the EU.

“If the UK does not provide a trade framework to replace these relationships on similar terms, these markets could be lost. This is a particular concern for Commonwealth states in the Caribbean” (Price, 2016, p. 503).

Independence for the Commonwealth Caribbean and the subsequent gifting of Westminster have not favored the region as it has left economic and social hardships for the region's people. To summarize, the region suffers from 1) deep-seated corruption in the government, 2) high crime rate in the countries, 3) stagnant economies, deeply burdened in debt, 4) majoritarian leadership with the marginalization of the Opposition party, 5) tourism – an almost single-market economy deeply rooted in the slavery and colonial past, and 6) poor governance and lack of transparency.

In a speech to the Barbados Chamber of Commerce in 2013, then Saint Lucian's Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony observed the consensus among authors critical of the Westminster model: that it has caused the biggest crisis since independence. “How our societies crawl out of this vicious vortex of persistent low growth, crippling debt, huge fiscal deficits, and high unemployment is the single most important question facing us at this time” (Edmonds, 2013, para. 3).

Setting and Sample Size

Publicly available documents used for this study were collected via the internet on government, news and journal and other websites.

Figure 5 Data Sample Size



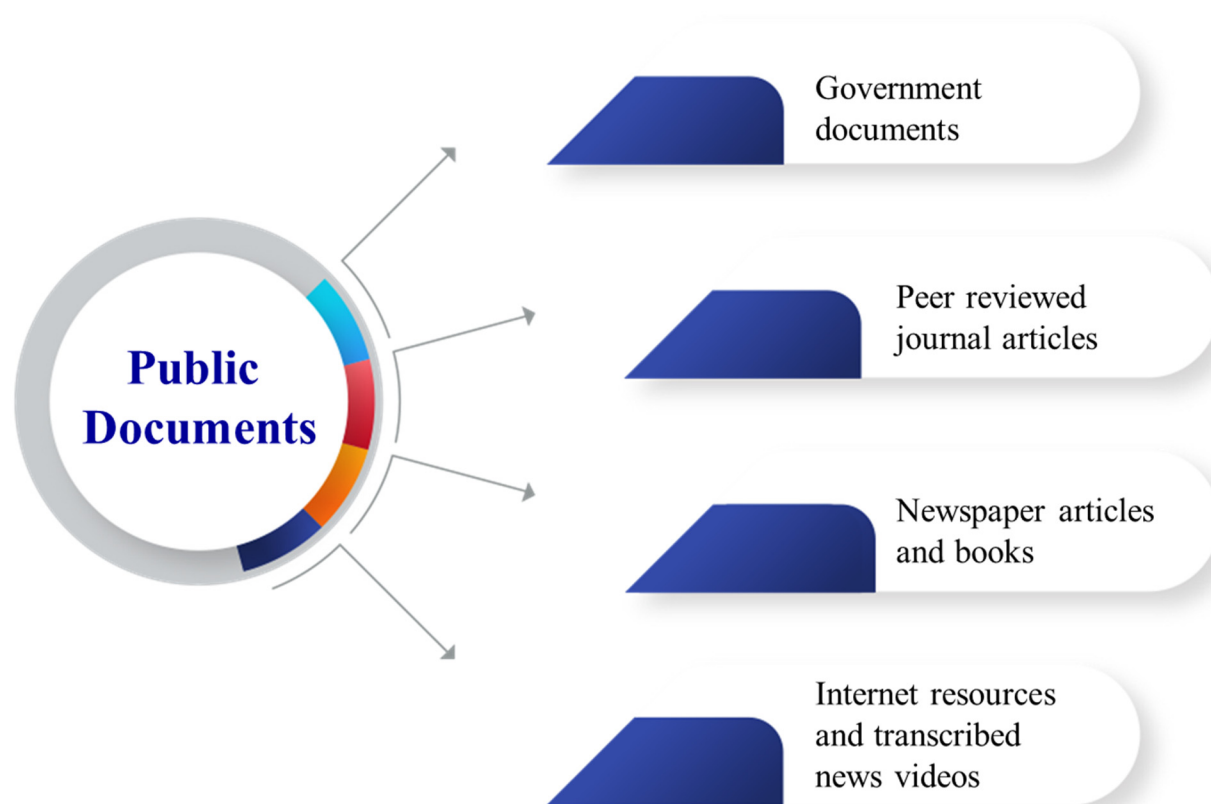
Additionally, the United Kingdom's government legislation website was used to retrieve the original independence declaration and constitutions of the former colonies issued upon gaining their independence.

I analyzed over 120 documents and placed in the following groupings: the original Independence Orders/Act and Constitutions, the literature review documents, the current literature, State of Emergency and COVID-19 Acts and COVID-19 and Debt documents.

Data Collection

The data collection process of publicly available documents using a qualitative document content analysis was performed completely online via the internet. These documents were downloaded in a PDF format for examination and analysis. This research involved nor posed no risk of revelation of confidential documents and information because I used publicly available documents.

Figure 6 Data Collection



The pertinent documents such as Caribbean countries' original constitutions and declaration of their independence from the United Kingdom was collected to perform the first series data analysis. The State of Emergency documents used by governments in the Caribbean was downloaded from their official government websites.

I used NVivo – Windows Release 1.5.2, a desktop computer data management application and manual processes that assisted me in collecting and managing the research documents used in this study. Though NVivo was used to analyze these documents, manual analysis was also necessary for the study. In preparation for the data collection process, I placed the documents into distinct groups: the original constitutions and independence declarations, government documents including COVID-19 State of Emergency Declarations, peer-reviewed journal articles including the literature review, constitutional reform documents, news videos, news periodicals.

Analysis

This qualitative document content analysis study aimed to identify and analyze the elements that influenced the implementation of the Westminster model of government on the social and economic conditions in Saint Lucia. Through this document analysis of publicly available documents, news articles, news videos, and other periodicals, I specifically concentrated on the contribution of the Westminster model on the level of corruption, debt, and poverty in Saint Lucia. Globalization has exposed the deep flaws of the Westminster model.

My data analysis began with the original constitutions of the Commonwealth Caribbean which were written in the year they gained their independence from the United Kingdom. In order to answer my research question, it was necessary to look at the beginning, that is, the moment in time that established the enabling conditions for corruption in Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth Caribbean: independence. I uploaded a total of twelve constitutions into the NVivo data management application. Many themes and sub-themes emerged, displaying how identical the verbiage in each constitution was to the other (see Table 1).

Table 1 Public Theme, Subthemes – Similar Language in Caribbean Constitutions

Theme	Subtheme	Countries	Language
Public	Public Safety	The Bahamas	(b) may be empowered or required by law to do so in the interests of defence, public safety or public order;
		Barbados	(b) may be empowered or required by law to do so in the interests of defence, public safety or public order;
		Belize	(b) may by law be empowered or required to do in the interests of defence, public safety or public order.
		Dominica	(b) may by law be empowered or required to do in the interests of defence, public safety or public order.
		Grenada	(a) that is reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality...

Theme	Subtheme	Countries	Language
		Guyana	(a) that is reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality...
		Jamaica	(a) which is reasonably required(i) in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health;
		Saint Kitts	(a) that is reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality, public health
		Saint Lucia	(a) that is reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality...
		Saint Vincent	(a) that is reasonably required in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality...

This provision in the Constitution of Saint Lucia appeared word for word in 10 other constitution.

Throughout the literature review, the prevalent, initial themes in the documents were: corruption, debt, poverty, and crime. However, when I imported these documents into NVivo, several additional themes emerged which gave additional credibility to the literature review process. For example, *political* code ($f = 303$) appeared in over 20 documents and was prominent (see Figure 7).

In many of the literature review documents, the mention of political system was made in reference to what the scholars saw as troubling warning signs for the region's system of government. Addressing the political system in the Caribbean, Payne (2007) reflected on the need for reforming the Westminster model, observing it was a bad symbol of governance. He pointed to failing political parties, bureaucracies under pressure, judicial systems in crisis and the destruction of the 'culture of civil discourse.' Payne stated that Westminster was destabilizing the political system which was leading to increasing apathy, anomie, and social volatility resulting from a collapse of standards and values.

“Additionally, political life in the Commonwealth Caribbean is characterised by an adversarial political culture, which marginalises opposition forces, thrives on clientelism and patronage, promotes corruption and compromises democracy” (Grenade, 2020, p. 4).

Figure 7 Visualization of Themes of the Literature Review

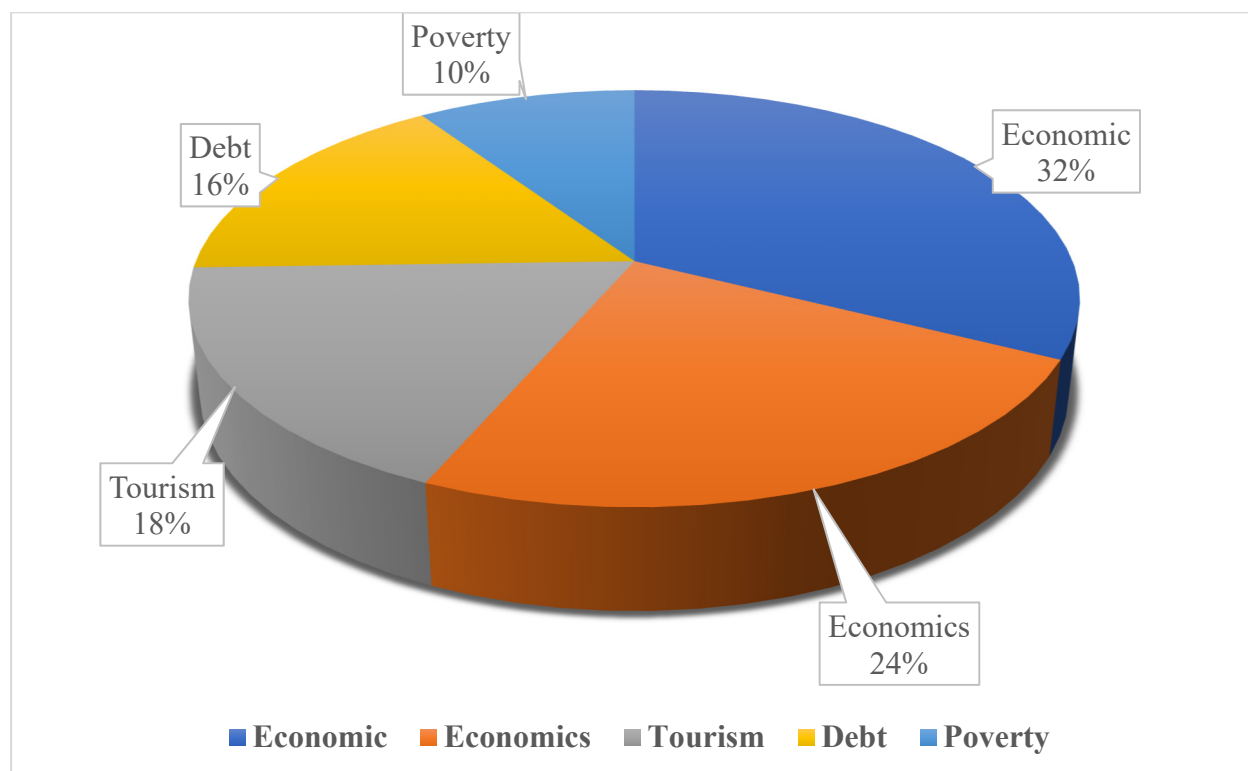


Public ($f = 159$) was another theme that emerged during the data analysis process. On the surface, looking at the word, I assumed that this theme dealt with the public and their well-being; however, after reading the transcript, various theme emerged such as corruption, crime and government (see Figure 8).

“...none of the Caribbean territories has a comprehensive system to require the reporting of all types of corrupt acts and conflicts of interest...” (Hylton, Gladys Young, 2007, pp. 256-257).

economies. The major categories of these economies impacted and revealed through the coding process (see Figure 10) included *economic impact* ($f=117$), *economies* ($f=87$), *tourism* ($f=65$), *debt* ($f=58$) and *poverty* ($f=34$). First, there is a distinction between economic and economics. Transcripts from parent code economic, *economic impact* ($f=11$) addresses the impact of the pandemic on economic activity. Tourism was the hardest hit industry for the Caribbean, with devastating economic impacts to Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Figure 10 COVID-19, Debt and their affects in the Caribbean Themes

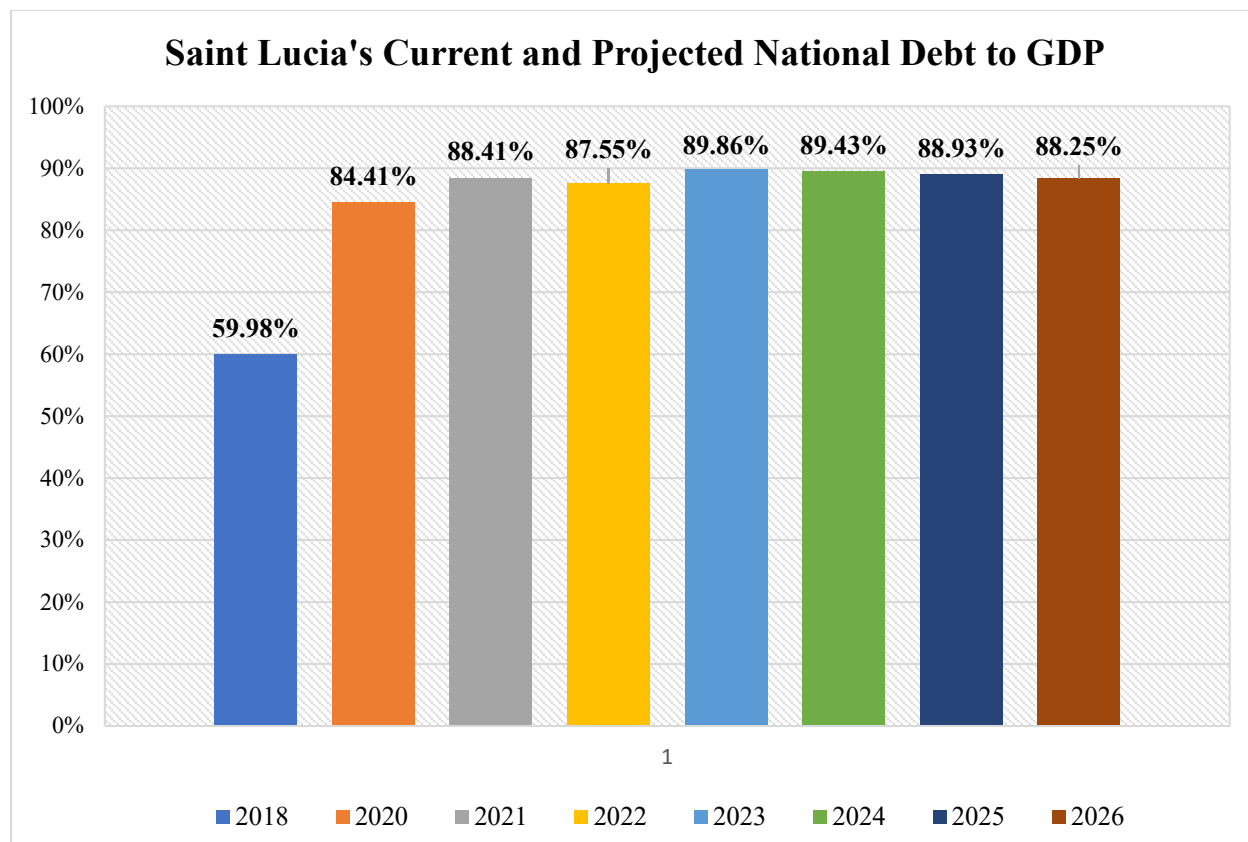


“Despite the relatively smaller human cost of the virus, the economic impact of this pandemic on SIDS are significant...The five most affected economies are Fiji (-21 %), St Kitts & Nevis (-19 %), Maldives (-19 %), Antigua & Barbuda (-17 %) and St Lucia (-17 %) ...” (Gounder & Cox, 2021, p. 6).

transcripts of the theme *caribbean economies* ($f=9$) described additional debt that the Caribbean had to assume to keep their economies going during the COVID-19 pandemic. Witter (2021) stated that because of the historical and geographical realities of the Caribbean economies...the rate of indebtedness of many Caribbean countries is high the...likely increased borrowings to finance the adjustments to COVID-19, these debt-to-GDP ratios are going to increase (p. 158).

Saint Lucia for the past three to four years experienced a debt-to-GDP ratio beyond 60% (see Figure 11).

Figure 11 Saint Lucia Debt-to-GDP



“As the fiscal strain on Caribbean economies continues to be very intense; with many of them have higher debt levels and fiscal deficits in 2020 than in 2019...” (Jhinkoo-Ramdass, 2021, p. 7). One year later into the pandemic and their fiscal space is even more strained and limited than before. Poverty concerns were heightened by COVID-19 and the region grappled with providing food security and providing basic needs to their people.

Results

The central themes that emerged from the documents analyzed manually and in NVivo revealed corruption, lack of governance, stagnant constitutions and high debt that Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth Caribbean continue to face (see Figure 12). COVID-19 added additional shocks to the already fragile economies as these nations scrambled to keep economic growth steady in the absent of the tourism-driven revenue. The innovative ways developed to diversity their economies become secondary as the mainstay of their economies, tourism, return to Saint Lucia and the other Commonwealth countries.

Figure 12 Central Themes



There were several key findings in the study, the most interesting of which was a region endeared with the colonial past. Debt continues to weigh heavily on the region. Already facing crushing debt, Saint Lucia borrowed over \$500 million dollars in the last two years to sustain its economy as COVID-19 interrupted its reliable revenue stream. The overarching finding of the study demonstrated how Saint Lucia and Commonwealth Caribbean are reluctant to completely abandon their colonial past.

While colonialism was the overarching theme, the literature review also examined the constitutions and the need for constitutional reform due to the harmful effects of the Westminster

model. Of the constitutions, the literature review viewed these documents as ones similar that was imposed by their colonizers.

The findings revealed: a) stagnant outdated constitutions, mired in colonial times, b) constitutions presented “At the Court at Buckingham Palace” containing almost the same language of Jamaica’s 1962 constitution, c) Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of State, and d) no appropriate language to address abuse of power by the prime minister beyond a vote of no confidence.

Saint Lucia remains one of three Caribbean nations whose constitution remains in the exact language as Coming into Operation on February 22, 1979.

In Saint Lucia’s, the ratio of the country's public debt to its gross domestic product (GDP), debt-GDP in 2021 was 88.41%. Statista (2022) indicates that Saint Lucia’s debt-to-GDP will average at least 88% until 2026. The debt currently being serviced by Saint Lucia is of great concern to the scholars of the peer-reviewed articles in the literature review. The literature indicated that SIDS were universally strangled by debt; recognizing the limited natural services to stimulate economic growth, international borrow from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for example, is no longer sustainable as the Commonwealth Caribbean will never generate enough revenue to repay these loans.

In a video conference held on April 20, 2020, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Alicia Bárcena analyze debt relief proposals and other measures to fight the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. prime ministers, premiers, finance ministers, financial secretaries, and other high-level government representatives from 15 Caribbean countries met to discuss the economic impact of COVID-19 on their economies, which was already beleaguered with climate and economic shocks including high debt.

Bárcena acknowledged that Caribbean countries, who are for the most part considered middle income countries, face a lack of access liquidity on concessional terms. She stated: “Caribbean countries must increase their fiscal space and need more favorable financing conditions, notwithstanding their income per capita income levels, in order to face the pandemic’s effects” (ECLAC, 2020).

All the leaders expressed their concern for vulnerabilities in their economies and urged ECLAC’s support for gaining more favorable terms for financing their debts from the IMF, for example. Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne said,

“the economic burden for our countries has been unsustainable because of the high levels of debt. We don’t have the capacity for printing money and our policy instruments are very limited...”
(ECLAC, 2020).

The Caribbean Dependency

The Caribbean Dependency Theory’s (CDT) core principles, which has been sidelined by Caribbean scholars, is at the heart of the economic predicament the Caribbean region finds itself. The key word here is “Dependency.” And though the late Professor Norman Girvan sixteen years ago in 2006 recognized in his article *Caribbean Dependency Thought Revisited* the contemporary relevance of the theory, the Caribbean’s dependency as a socio-economic formation of peripheral capitalism still holds true and we need to look no further than the previously mentioned video conference held on April 20, 2020 with the Economic Commission for Latin America.

CDT indicates that Caribbean finances are characterized by fiscal dependence and reliance on foreign loans and grants; CDT is primarily concerned with economic self-reliance in accumulation, production, and consumption in the Caribbean nations. Girvan (2006) observed that though there were varying views on CDT, the main objective, however, was still a desire to create economies that was driven by its own internal dynamic forces. Saint Lucia’s dependency on external forces to drive its economy does not start nor end with tourism, though that sector accounts for over 65% of its GDP.

Saint Lucian economist Dr. Claudius Preville said in January 2022 that if the country did not receive direct foreign investment in key parts of the economy, the economy would sputter as best. He also conceded that the country created an economy that was to heavily reliant on tourism.

“...The economy is largely driven by the service sector, which makes up approximately 83% of the economy, with the agricultural and service sectors accounting for a mere 5%. The average economic growth rate for Saint Lucia over last 10 decade has been a meager 1.1 %” (Nicholas, 2022).

With Dr. Preville also stating that more emphasis should be placed on agricultural development, he noted that Saint Lucia has some of the best arable land in the Caribbean, (land capable of producing crops and suitable for farming), making it all the more vexing that Saint Lucia’s, pre COVID-19 2019 food import bill exceeded \$150 million, which included \$23 million in vegetable crops. Many of the imported vegetables are also grown and produced on the island.

Now in 2022, there is renewed interest in agriculture and a desire to reduce dependence on foreign produce imports. Saint Lucia's Minister for Agriculture Alfred Prospere indicated that through the locally growing 7-Foods Project launched in 2019, may finally bear fruit and begin chipping away at the food import bill.

“The 7-Foods Project focuses on cabbage, lettuce, watermelon, cantaloupe, bell pepper, pineapple and tomato crops. Financing and technical support will come from The Republic of China on Taiwan for a period of three years” (Isadore, 2021).

The Political Constitutional Theory

The endurance of Constitutions asserts that constitutions survive over time. Ginsberg (2011) stated that without endurance, constitutions cannot provide the framework for politics and thus, these documents survive for an extended period. The authors however, discovered that most written constitutions are short-lived. Thomas Jefferson also critiqued and argued that constitutions should be replaced every 19 years to allow successive generations the opportunity to determine their own basic rules to govern their society. “Thomas Jefferson engaged in the most extensive of these critiques, arguing that the dead had no right to govern the living” (Ginsberg, 2011, p. 113). Saint Lucia was among only three Commonwealth Caribbean nations who have not updated or amended their constitutions since its conception, for Saint Lucia, since 1978. This document appears stale and stagnant, with little social and political relevance for the present generation.

The Political Constitutional Theory's core principles describes a system of power-sharing between the branches of government and the separation of powers. Minkinen (2013) stated that a constitution had the power to standardize formal processes through the creation of norms and the political principles that must be observed to in order to gain validity. The findings of the study revealed that the constitutions of the Commonwealth Caribbean mirror each other and were primarily based on the Jamaica's 1962 constitution. Since these documents were similar to each other, the norms, traditions and customs of each specific country was not an integral part of the constitutions once the former colonies became independent nations.

Professor Norman Girvan recalled the time when the Jamaica's constitution was being written, public consultation in 1962 were sessions attended by a handful of officials and that no one believed that these officials were taken serious by the British.

“The template of the Constitution was, I presume, supplied by the Colonial Office. There was a joke that they printed them all somewhere and just substituted the name of the newest country” (Girvan, 2015, p. 96).

Another core principle of The Political Constitutional Theory was the concept of constitution-making. It supports the principles, in terms of political will, of how the authority make decisions about the political existence and how it is structured to make the society function. It appears however, that these principles of constitution-making power were not a concept that was important to Premier Norman Manley when five months before Jamaica’s constitution and independence in 1962 he said,

“I make no apology for the fact that we did not attempt to embark upon any original or novel exercise in constitutional building...Let us not make the mistake of describing as colonial, institutions which are part and parcel of the heritage of this country” (Girvan, 2015, p.97).

On November 30, 2021, Barbados celebrated its Independence Day by officially become a republic; the Caribbean welcomed its fourth republic. Barbados, in 2021 was presented a unique opportunity immerse itself in the core principles of the Political Constitutional Theory: updating its 55-year-old constitution and subsequently, engaging in the constitution-making process. It is the hope...the desire that the new constitution will be absent of all relics of the colonial past and will usher in a new era in Caribbean governance. Prime Minister Mottley indicated that new Constitution eventually will reflect who they are in the third decade of the 21st century...

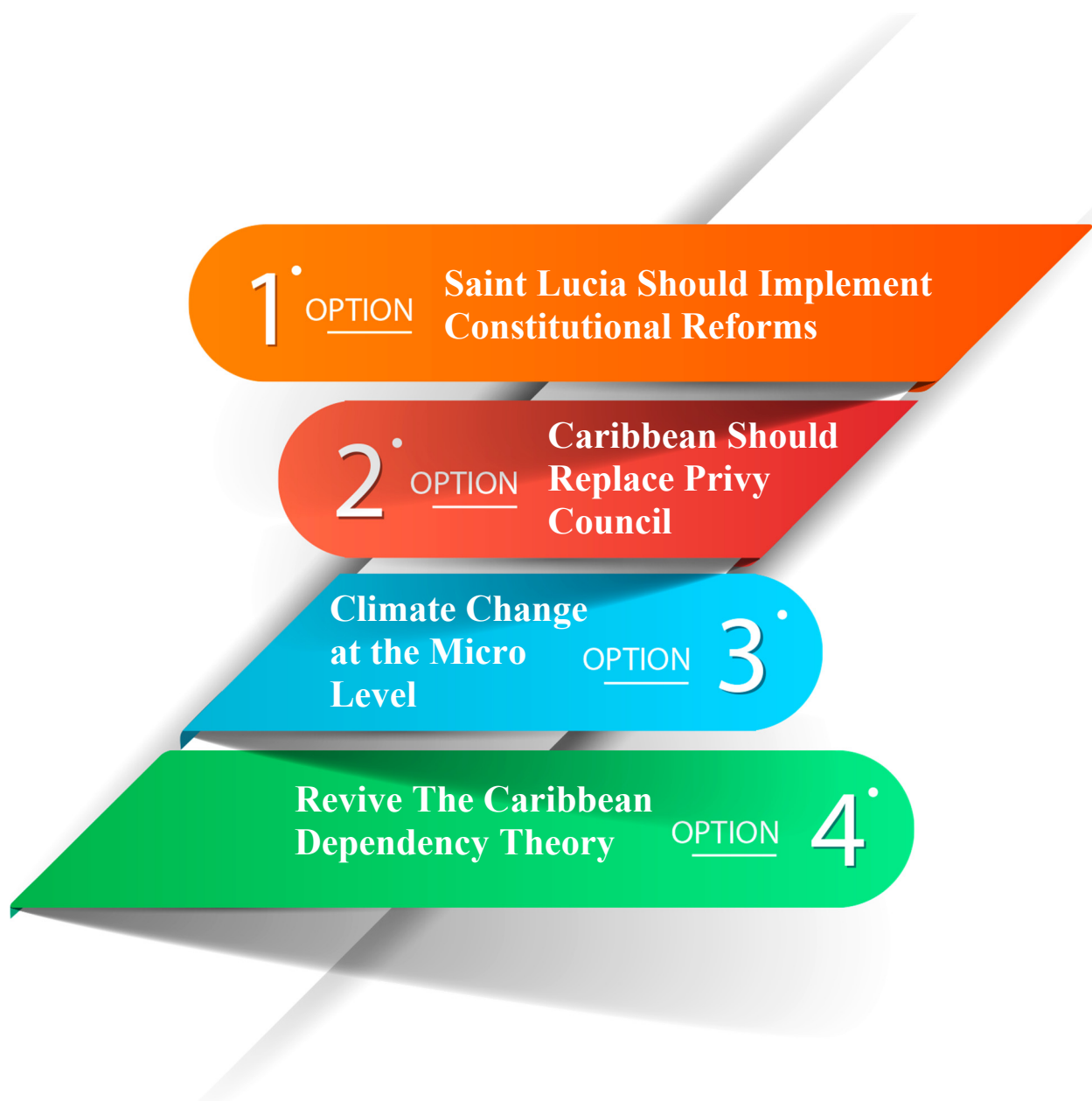
The prime minister indicated that the current constitution will be broken down, chapter by chapter in a process that will take 12 to 15 months.

Recommendations

Saint Lucia Should Implement Constitutional Reforms

Saint Lucia Statutory Instrument No. 50 of 2004, dated July 16, 2004, voted on and approved by the House of Assembly and the Senate, by unanimous resolution, established the Constitutional Reform Commission. The Commission was chaired by Saint Lucian-born the late Madam Justice Suzie d’Auvergne, The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, who said about the

Figure 13 Recommendations



constitution,



“It served well, but it has done its time...and it has to be amended. It has to fit the time. We have to move forward. A constitution cannot be stagnant”
(ConReformSLU, 2007).



The prime minister at the time was Dr. Kenny D. Anthony who brought the report before Parliament on Tuesday, August 18, 2015 for debate. While many in Parliament admitted that the constitution needed to be update, there was general opposition to the reforms by the Government of Saint Lucia with one member calling the recommendations “ridiculous and preposterous.” Current Prime Minister Philip J. Pierre who at the time served as the Parliamentary Representative of Castries East (a position he still holds) though supportive of updating the constitution, was generally opposed to many of the recommendations.

I recommend that the Government of Saint Lucia implement The Saint Lucia Constitutional Report Commission Report document and give strong consideration on becoming a republic.

The Caribbean Nations Should Replace the Privy Council

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) vs. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council: Established in 2001, the CCJ has exclusive and compulsory authority for interpreting and applying the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. The Privy Council, located in the United Kingdom, is cost prohibitive and tends to favor the elite class. Only four Commonwealth Caribbean nations utilize the CCJ as its court of final appeal: Dominica, Barbados, Belize and Guyana.

BBC Caribbean (2009) reported that Lord Phillips, formerly UK Chief Justice stated that that “in an ideal world” the Commonwealth Caribbean would stop using the Privy Council and establish their own final court of appeal. The Privy Council also represents one of the last vestiges of the colonial past. Saint Lucia’s prime minister Philip J. Pierre indicated on Monday January 25, 2022 his intentions to move to the CCJ as the nation’s final appellate court.

I recommend that the remaining nations adopt the CCJ as its court of final appeal.

Climate Change at the Micro Level

I recommend further, in-depth studies on the impact of climate change on the Caribbean beyond the over-produced research on rising sea levels and temperatures, continuing damage and depletion of the coral reef and increased violent hurricanes. Community-level research at the human level needs to be conducted.

Dr. James Fletcher, Saint Lucia's former Minister of Sustainable Development stated that infrastructure developments in areas that compromise the integrity of watersheds, poor waste management and government's continued support for hotel development along the coastline affects the sea level with the creation of rising and deadly storm surges.

The Caribbean Dependency Theory Should Be Revived

The CDT, which served as one of my theoretical frameworks was abandoned in peer-review research in the mid to late 1970s. The problems stemming from the lack of development in the region was linked to epistemic dependence, the reliance of regional elites on imported ideas and concepts of little to no significance to the real conditions in the nations in the Caribbean.



Girvan (2006) suggested that the theory's ultimate decline was due to several unresolved theoretical, methodological, and political issues as well as wider intellectual and political developments.



Research must be performed to ascertain what unresolved issues led to the decline of CDT; and CDT's refined framework and core principles must be applied to explain Caribbean dependency and why it continues to persist in the modern era.

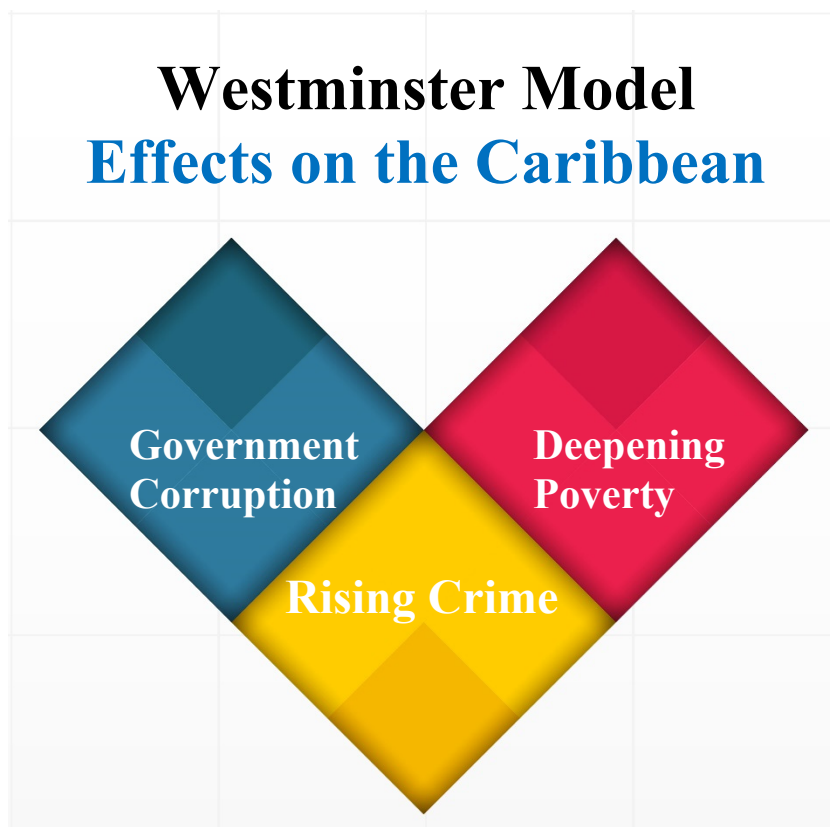
Implications for Positive Social Change

The objective of this study was to bring about social change that will create better standards of living for the people of the Caribbean. Social change is defined and mentioned throughout the study and was a thread woven tightly to the objective of the study and its ultimate result. The most significant restating of social change and its objective in this study is: social change does not require advanced education and training; it is a simple premise that can be proposed by the average citizen in the community, pushing for basic changes that is so meaningful that it creates events that could lead to social changes such as constitutional reforms, transparent and measurable governance and economic and change that will create better standards of living for the people of the Caribbean.

Conclusion

The recommendation of this study is that the region, particularly Saint Lucia, embark on constitutional reforms. This represents that best opportunity to bring positive social change to individuals, families, on an organizational level and to society on the whole: a new charter...a constitution steeped not in colonialism but in the values and traditions that makes Saint Lucia and other Caribbean nations exude the ideals that have allowed them to endure through the centuries.

Figure 14 The Westminster Model



The findings of this study revealed a region continuing to struggle with its colonial past: four nations, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica and Barbados are now republics, removed Queen Elizabeth II as their head of state but are still members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The other former colonies, including Saint Lucia do not appear ready to remove the last remanence of their colonial past and fully embrace and join the four brethren in becoming a republic through a constitutional reform process. The concept that grounded this study was colonialism; therefore, my overarching recommendation for the nations who comprise the Commonwealth Caribbean is to embrace their rich history, culture and heritage and leave the colonial past where it belongs: in the past.

When the region was colonized, the island was populated and flourished with the Amerindians, Arawak and the Carib Indians who left behind a lush rich history of tradition, some of which are visible in today Caribbean societies, but most are all have vanished. The Westminster model has been credited for creating the largest collection of thriving democracies in the Caribbean than in any part of the world. In 2022, the Commonwealth Caribbean, this sustaining region of free democracies should not be governed by constitutions that require them to be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her Heirs and Successors, according to law, so help them God.

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