

When bilateral relations strain, do local level relations remain?

*An investigation into how a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the
Netherlands and Turkey influences local level Dutch-Turkish relations*



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Preface

In front of you lies my master's thesis. Over the last months I conducted this study to complete my Human Geography's Master Programme: Europe; Identities, borders and governance. In the process of writing this thesis I have learned a lot about the Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships and partnerships.

In 2016, I studied in Istanbul for half a year. During that time I became aware of the long standing diplomatic relationship between Turkey and the Netherlands. I attended several events of the Dutch consulate in Istanbul celebrating the old friendship between the nations. When I returned back home to the Netherlands, I continued to be interested in Turkey and its relationship with the Netherlands. When in March 2017 the Dutch-Turkish diplomatic conflict occurred, I was shocked how fast the deep rooted relations between the nations deteriorated. I became aware of Nijmegen's local partnership with Gaziantep when I read about it in a local newspaper. The mayor of Gaziantep had demanded Nijmegen to release a statement against the official stance of the Dutch government, following the events of national level diplomatic deterioration. Starting to examine topics for my master thesis in the field Europe's identities, borders and governance, the diplomatic relationship between Turkey and the Netherlands immediately came to my mind. After exploring the theme, I found out about transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations; town twinning and partnerships. It surprised me that the deterred diplomatic relationship between the Netherlands and Turkey caused a termination of two town twinning relationships, but other Dutch-Turkish partnerships were kept on going. This made me wonder why this was the case and so I landed my master's thesis topic.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Simone Pekelsma, for supporting me and providing me with much appreciated and valued feedback on my research. She always made time for me to discuss ideas and especially motivated me whenever I felt stuck. Additionally, I would like to thank all of the people I interviewed of the Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships and partnerships. Without them, this research would not have been possible. I am grateful that they welcomed me and shared their stories and experiences.

I hope you will enjoy reading this master's thesis.

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Summary

In this study I researched how a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey led to a termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships while other transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships have remained unaffected. The town twinning in phases model provided the theoretical framework to conduct this research. By interviewing nine involved actors of four different transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships (Almelo-Denizli, Amsterdam-Şişli, Haarlem-Emirdağ and Nijmegen-Gaziantep) about topics regarding the organizational structure, experiences, cultural exchange, exchange of ideas, financial exchange and influence of the national level. I aimed to get an answer to the main research question. This study found that, under the circumstances of deterred diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands, the termination of a local transnational relationship is not determined by the phase the local level relationship is in, but on the will of the municipal executives to back national governments stances. Regarding future research, this study suggests to include actors on the Turkish side to gain an even more extended understanding of the situation regarding the selective termination of transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Besides that, a coherence between cultural exchange and reduced intercultural prejudice came forward. Therefore, I suggest for future research to explore how cultural exchange exactly leads to reduced intercultural prejudice.

Recommendations for praxis include:

1. Establishing concrete agreements about mutual expectations and goals before entering a transnational partnership. Including a discussion about the possibility of deteriorating diplomatic relations on the national level and signing a clause with a joint statement rejecting interference of the national level. In which is clearly stated that political quarrels on the national level are subordinate to the mutual benefits of local level collaboration.
2. Introducing a workshop for involved actors in the transnational relationships which focusses on intercultural communication, in this way increasing understanding for each other. Learning in this workshop about the background of the other side. For example knowing how to greet in a different culture, learning the ways of non-verbal behavior, how feelings are expressed, delving into what is considered private and in what manner criticism is expressed. Additionally this workshop should also reflect on intercultural understanding and becoming aware of difference and cultural bias. This workshop could be given by, depending on the budget, by a communication bureau or by an involved actor of the counter partner.

1. Introduction

“Turkey is on the wrong track when it comes to the development of democracy”

Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands, 20th of April 2018 (NOS, 2018)

“Hey Rutte; you may have won the elections, but you lost a friend like Turkey”

President Erdoğan of Turkey, 16th of March 2017 (CNBC, 2017)

Over the past years diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey have worsened (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018). The quotes relate to the Dutch-Turkish diplomatic conflict of March 2017 when Turkey sent its minister of Family Affairs to the Netherlands to speak about the referendum regarding the constitutional change in Turkey, but the Netherlands denied the diplomat access to the country (de Volkskrant, 2017). Although in order to normalize diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands new ambassadors have been appointed, bilateral relations between the countries are still tense (NOS, 2018). Derogation in Dutch-Turkish bilateral relations started in 2011 when, at the time, Turkish president Gül felt insulted by Dutch extreme-right (PVV) party leader Geert Wilders (de Volkskrant, 2011). In 2012 it was 400 years ago since the Netherlands (the former Republic of United Seven Netherlands) and Turkey (the former Ottoman Empire) started their diplomatic relations (Douglas, 2001). Prior to the celebrations of the long standing diplomatic relations, Wilders stated that a leader of an Islamic regime (referring to at the time president Gül) shouldn't be welcome in the Netherlands, Turkey was offended (De Volkskrant, 2011). Bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands worsened in 2013 when prime minister Erdoğan criticized the fostering of a Turkish-Dutch foster child by lesbian parents during an official visit to the Netherlands (De Volkskrant, 2013). Vice premier Asscher found the interference of Turkey ‘totally inappropriate’ and called it ‘overbearing’ for a foreign power to have an opinion on the policy of Dutch foster care (Çevik & Seib, 2015). Erdoğan wanted the Turkish Ministry of Family Affairs and the Ministry of Security and Justice to discuss the fostering of children of Turkish origin in the Netherlands, but Prime Minister Mark Rutte rejected this proposal. Tensed Dutch-Turkish diplomatic relations reached an absolute low point in the 2017 Dutch-Turkish diplomatic conflict (De Volkskrant, 2017). The Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs wanted to give a speech at the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam regarding the vote about the constitutional change referendum in Turkey, where it would be decided if Recep Erdoğan would gain more absolute power. The Netherlands officially stated that the minister was not welcome (Gunter, 2018). Turkey responded by sending the Turkish minister of Family affairs, coming by car to Rotterdam

from Germany. The Dutch government declared the minister of Family Affairs as ‘unwanted stranger’ and sent the minister back to Germany under police escort. Turkey responded by establishing diplomatic sanctions against the Netherlands. The Dutch ambassador in Ankara was sent back to the Netherlands and back and forth hostility was shown until the start of normalizing bilateral relations in September 2018 (De Volkskrant, 2018). In addition to bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands, there are local Dutch-Turkish relations as well. Due to longstanding bilateral relations between the countries, several local Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships and partnerships have been developed over the years (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018). The tensions on the national level between Turkey and the Netherlands were also felt on the local level (De Volkskrant, 2017).

In total there have been seven transnational local relationships between Dutch and Turkish cities (shown in table 1). The town twinning relationship between Alkmaar and Bergama started in 2004. The city of Alkmaar stated that there has not been any official contact since 2016, but exchanges between schools have occurred (de Volkskrant, 2017). As can be seen in table 1, the town twinning of Almelo and Denizli ended in March 2017, after the mayor of Almelo did not accept demands of the mayor of Denizli to contradict the Dutch government (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018). The town twinning started officially in 1974 after intensive contact between Turkish guest workers in the Netherlands mostly coming from Denizli. Although ended, the town twinning of Almelo and Denizli is the oldest and longest Dutch-Turkish town twinning partnership. The partnership between Amsterdam and Kocaeli started officially in 2000, after Turkish Amsterdammers collected money in response to a big earthquake in the Turkish region (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018). Amsterdam stated that since 2013 there has been less contact with Kocaeli and the last official work visit is dated back to November 2014. The partnership ended in 2018. The partnership between Amsterdam and the Istanbul neighborhood of Şişli started in 2012, after Amsterdam reached out to the Dutch consulate in Istanbul asking them to help with finding a partner in sports and culture (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018). Their partnership is still going strong and has not been affected by the conflict of March 2017. An official town twinning relationship between Delft and Adapazarı started in 1999, due to intensive contact about an earthquake in the Kocaeli area. Delft canceled all its town twinning relationships in November 2017, because of new local international policies (Onafhankelijk Delft, 2017). The foundation ‘Partnercity Delft Adapazarı’ continues to exist. Two thirds of Turkish Haarlemmers are from Emirdağ (NCDO, 2008). After contact with the local government, a partnership was established in 1995. Although the partnership is still intact, the municipality of Haarlem stated exchanges have

decreased since 2012 (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018). The last transnational local relationship to address is the one between Nijmegen and Gaziantep. After the Dutch-Turkish diplomatic conflict of March 2017 the mayor of Gaziantep renamed ‘Nijmegen Boulevard’ and demanded that the mayor of Nijmegen would renounce the national statement made by the Dutch government. The mayor of Nijmegen declined. Although it is not clear if the official rupture has been carried through by the mayor of Gaziantep, the town twinning relationship has been canceled by Gaziantep (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018).

Table 1: Overview local level transnational relationships between the Netherlands and Turkey.

	Dutch City	Turkish City	Status	Start date	End date
1.	Alkmaar	Bergama	Intact	2004	-
2.	Almelo	Denizli	Unilateral canceled by Denizli	1974	March 2017
3.	Amsterdam	Kocaeli	Canceled by both parties	2000	2018
4.	Amsterdam	Şişli (sub municipality of Istanbul)	Intact	2012	-
5.	Delft	Adapazarı	Unilateral canceled by Delft	1999	November 2017
6.	Haarlem	Emirdağ	Intact	1995	-
7.	Nijmegen	Gaziantep	Unilateral canceled by Gaziantep	2006	March 2017

Poor Dutch-Turkish bilateral relations have led to cancellation of town twinning partnerships, bilateral relations on a local level. This research focuses on ‘how a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey has led to termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships while other transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships remain unaffected’. First I will look into the concept of town twinning, followed by a short overview of bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands. This leads to the central part of this research, namely how worsened diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands has led to the termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. In this way this research tries to contribute to the scientific need of filling the research gap concerning town twinning and the link with bilateral relations (Jayne

et al., 2011). Additionally, it contributes to the societal need of gaining insight in the importance of local level transnational relationships and effective diplomacy.

1.1 Town twinning & Previous research

Officially town twinning is a form of legal or social agreement between towns or cities in geographically and politically distinct areas to promote cultural and commercial ties (Zellinsky, 2010). The concept of ‘town twinning’ includes officially bound partner cities as well as partnerships between cities with a less official status. The transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships vary in their status. Amsterdam and Şişli, for example, call their collaboration a partnership, whereas the former collaboration between Almelo and Denizli was an official town twinning relationship. In this research both forms of transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships fall under the broad concept of ‘town twinning’ as described in the literature, because ‘town twinning’ is a broad encompassing definition describing the phenomenon of a close partnerships between towns, cities and counties (Defrance, 2008; Zellinsky, 2010; Self-Pierson, 2012, Szostak, 2014; Jayne et al., 2016).

The concept of town twinning came into use after the second world war to facilitate friendship and understanding between different cultures and to promote peace and reconciliation using the exchange of ideas (van den Bergh, 2011). In the unique research of de Villiers et al (2006) a chronological process of town twinning is described. According to them, town twinning evolved through three phases (de Villiers et al., 2006); 1) Associative phase: twinning based on friendship and cultural exchange, 2) Reciprocativ¹ phase: twinning based on educational exchange and people’s exchange and 3) Commercial exchange phase: twinning based on economic development. Each phase does not abandon the earlier aspects of town twinning, but is an attempt to take advantage of the process to further their local strategic aims. The authors state that in a time of globalization, town twinning has become more important. The first phase (the associative phase) took place right after the Second World War up until around the ‘70’s when an increase in educational and people’s exchange occurred (de Villiers et al., 2006). The authors ascribe the increase of these exchanges to an increase of wealth in the ‘Western World’ intertwining in the process of globalization. The second phase (the reciprocative phase) lasted, according to the authors, till the 2000’s, when globally an increase in so-called ‘Strategic Management’ was seen (de Villiers et al., 2006). Since the last two decades the third phase took place, meaning that town twinning has become

¹ ‘Reciprocative’ is a term created by Villiers et al. (2006), derived from ‘reciprocity’ to stress the interactive component of back- and forth exchanges in this phase.

increasingly used to form strategic international business links between member cities according to these authors. Although in the literature there is an understanding of what town twinning is, a friendly partnership facilitating cultural exchange, exchange of ideas and financial exchange, this is not the case for local citizens. This unfamiliarity can be explained by various factors (Self-Pierson, 2012). For starters, the term ‘town twinning’ goes by a lot of different names: sister cities, partnership towns, twin towns, partner towns, friendship towns, cities-bond and twinned towns are all different terminologies to describe the same phenomena. Besides that, citizens often are not aware a town twinning relationships is initiated. The citizens that have heard about town twinning often do not know what a town twinning relationship exactly is, it is perceived by most citizens as an unclear phenomenon (Herrschel & Newman, 2017). Town twinning is aimed at learning from each other. In most town twinning relationships, a small group is active in maintaining the town twinning relationship. This is due to town twinning often being facilitated (in terms of subsidy) by the municipality and being operated by local committees. The people active in these committees, who organize exchanges between the cities are a small, but dedicated, group. Local actors involved in a town twinning relationship often fail to reach a broad audience, because citizens are unaware of the town twinning relationship and therefore do not know about activities organized in the context of the town twinning relationship (Self-Pierson, 2012).

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) stresses the importance of town twinning to: 1) guarantee peaceful relations and to ensure active participation on the local level, 2) to reinforce mutual understanding and friendship between citizens and 3) to encourage exchange of best practices amongst municipalities (CEMR, 2014). In some municipalities with town twinning relationships there have been discussions if town twinning is attributing to these goals and whether in the age of globalization town twinning is superfluous (Clarke, 2011; Furmankiewicz, 2005; Langenohl, 2015). The main discussion points in these evaluations are the costs of town twinning, because it is funded by local taxes, and what it contributes to the local society (Langenohl, 2015). By looking into Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships that are either still intact or have been terminated, this research contributes to the societal debate regarding these local level relations. A contribution in a general sense: by providing insights in what transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations have to offer culturally and economically. But also in a more explorative sense: focusing on Dutch-Turkish town twinning relations in an environment where bilateral tensions between Turkey and the Netherlands are high. In this way this study attributes in gaining insights in the effectiveness of forms of local level diplomacy in such a situation.

There are a lot of town twinning relationships in the world. Since the 1960's they have become a big phenomenon. Despite this mass development, research has shown little interest in this form of international relations that occur on a local level (Jayne et al., 2011). If interest is shown, only the economic benefits are examined (Brakman et al., 2016). The third phase according to de Villiers et al (2006). A new trend in town twinning research is occurring, focusing on Europe and examining to what extent citizen's support for the European Union can be increased by town twinning (Tausendpfund & Schäfer, 2018). There is a gap in town twinning literature where research is focused on the relation between the national level and the local level; the connection between bilateral relations and their town twinning relations. Meaning that although bigger international communities (like the EU) are sometimes linked to town twinning research, there is no focus on diplomatic relations between two countries and the link to town twinning. This research, focusing on how bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey are experienced on the local level through town twinning, is therefore innovative in the town twinning academic field.

1.2 Bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands

Bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands have been existing for over more than 400 years (Erkus-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2010). Already in the Ottoman Empire, Dutch tradesmen had a special position where they did not need to pay taxes and were able to move through the Empire freely. This friendly relationship was somewhat exceptional in the light of other parts of Europe that, at that time, were overruled by the Ottoman Empire (Woodhouse, 1956). The establishment of good relations between the nations showed when in 1923 the Netherlands was the first country to recognize the independence of the Turkish Republic (Knoop, 2017). After the Association Agreement between Turkey and the European Union was signed in 1963, Turkish guest workers were coming to Europe. A relatively large part of that group settled in the Netherlands (Çevik & Seib, 2015). Under the Dutch European Union presidency in the early 2000s, again the solidarity was visible when Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU started (Erkus-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2010). After 2011 cracks in the wall of bilateral relations became visible after minor disputes between the nations (Çevik & Seib, 2015). The escalation of deterring bilateral relations started after the Dutch-Turkish conflict of March 2017, elaborately explained in the next chapter, resulting in some terminations of Turkish-Dutch town twinning relationships (Gunter, 2018). This short overview of Turkey's and the Netherlands's bilateral relations shows that over a long period of time diplomatic relations between the countries have existed. Most of the time in a positive

reflexive context. Only in the last decade have the diplomatic relations worsened. This historical context, which will be discussed more elaborately in the next chapter, is of importance to understand why transnational local relationships between the Netherlands and Turkey exist.

1.3 Research goal

This research aims at clarifying how worsened bilateral relations on a national level between Turkey and the Netherlands are related to transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Meaning that due to worsened bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands some Dutch-Turkish town twinning partnerships have been ended, while others transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations still exist. To clarify this discrepancy, interviews with Dutch local actors involved in these local Dutch-Turkish relationships will be conducted. Although the focus of interviews that will be conducted lies with Dutch local actors, a finding on as well Dutch as Turkish experiences of diplomatic relations is aimed to be found. Due to the prediction that in-depth interviews with Dutch local actors will provide insight in Turkish experiences, because through collaboration interaction and experiences between both sides are exchanged and will come forward. The following objective can be distinguished in this study:

- To gain insight into the question how a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey has led to a termination of some transnational Dutch-Turkish local relationships while other transnational Dutch-Turkish local relationships partnerships have remained unaffected.

1.4 Main and sub-questions

Bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey have worsened over the past years (De Volkskrant, 2018). As a result two town twinning relationships were canceled (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018). This raises the ‘why’ question: what is (not) so different about transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations that leads to the cancellation of some, but not all. To me this selective cancellation on the local level, while the worsened diplomatic state applies to the national level as whole, is surprising and it made me curious about the underlying reason; Could this selective cancellation be due to different styles of collaboration on the local level, to the involvement of local actors, differences in cultural exchange, exchange of ideas and financial exchange on the local level, differences in the political situation of the municipalities or is there another underlying reason? To find an answer to why the national level state of worsened bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey has a different outcome on

transnational local level Dutch-Turkish relationships, the following main question of this study is centralized:

‘‘How did a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey lead to a termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships while other transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships have remained unaffected?’’

To be able to answer the main research question we need to look into different aspects of Dutch-Turkish (diplomatic) relations. This will be done by using the town twinning theory of de Villiers et al (2006). First the organization of town twinning relationships between the Netherlands and Turkey will be researched. Followed by zooming in on who is involved in Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships and how these local actors experience Dutch-Turkish town twinning. These sub-questions are designed to find out how the town twinning relations are shaped on the organizational level. Because town twinning is a local tool facilitating cultural exchange, exchange of ideas and financial exchange (van den Bergh, 2011; Zellinsky, 2010), we dive deeper into these concepts to find out how town twinning is used to facilitate these exchanges. The answers to these questions will provide insights in differences between Turkish-Dutch town twinning relationships, on the organizational level as well as in the different forms of exchange (cultural, financial and exchange of ideas). By finding answers to the sub-questions, the main research question can be answered and a reason for a different outcome of worsened national diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey on the Dutch-Turkish local level can be found. The following sub-questions are formulated:

- (1) ‘‘How are town twinning relationships between the Netherlands and Turkey organized?’’*
- (2) ‘‘How do local actors experience Dutch-Turkish town twinning relations?’’*
- (3) ‘‘How is town twinning used as a local tool to facilitate cultural exchange between the Netherlands and Turkey?’’*
- (4) ‘‘How is town twinning used as a local tool to facilitate exchange of ideas between the Netherlands and Turkey?’’*
- (5) ‘‘How is town twinning used as a local tool to facilitate financial exchange between the Netherlands and Turkey?’’*
- (6) ‘‘How do diplomatic relations on a national level influence Dutch-Turkish town twinning?’’*

To research this topic, interviews have been conducted with (former) Dutch local actors involved in transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations. These interviews took place in October, November and December of 2018. In total nine (formerly) involved Dutch local actors of four different Dutch-Turkish partnerships have been interviewed. The following topics were questioned in the context of the town twinning relationships: cultural exchange, exchange of ideas, experiences of local actors, financial exchange, the organizational structure and the influence of the national level.

2.Theory

In this chapter the historical context of international relations between Turkey and the Netherlands is described. Followed by the disquisition of international relation theory, the position of town twinning is established. Afterwards the ‘phases model’ of town twinning is discussed to provide an assumption regarding Dutch-Turkish town twinning. At last the discussion about the relevance of town twinning in a globalizing world is addressed. These components combined provide the theoretical framework of this research.

2.1 Diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands

Before going into the theoretical aspects of town twinning, first the historical context of bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands is explained to give a better understanding of the current state of Dutch-Turkish relations. This is important to understand the political context in which some Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships have been affected.

Looking into the modern history of bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands, the first trade connections between the Netherlands and Turkey have been found already in the Middle Ages. During the Holy Crusades the Dutch passed Turkey and established some trade on a small scale (Erkus-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2010). In the 16th Century trade connections were increasing, due to support of the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands who were battling Spain (Karpát & Stanford, 1978).

In 1612 the Turkish Sultan Ahmed I allowed the Dutch diplomate Conelis Haga to conduct trade in Istanbul under the Dutch flag (Erkus-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2010). Herewith the Ottoman Empire was the first country acknowledging the independence of the Republic of the United Netherlands. In the end of the 16th Century the famous ‘Dutch’ flower, the tulip, found its way through trade to the Netherlands (Woodhouse, 1956). The tulip gradually developed into a Dutch national symbol. Trade relations continued to prosper in the 17th century, when

Dutch tradesmen started to settle in important Ottoman cities (like Thessaloniki, Izmir and Aleppo). This gave the Dutch access to the Levant trade market, focused around the Ottoman city of Izmir, which is still part of modern Turkey (Erkus-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2010). Dutch tradesmen had a special position in the Ottoman Empire, they did not need to pay taxes and were able to move freely through the Empire. This friendly and economic background between the Netherlands and Turkey was somewhat exceptional, since other Western European countries did not have friendly ties with Turkey and the Balkans were even overruled by the Ottoman Empire for a long time (Woodhouse, 1956).

In 1923 the Netherlands were the first country to recognize the independence of the Turkish Republic (Knoop, 2017). During the Turkish War of Independence in the 20th century, the Dutch publicly expressed their support for the Turks. Which was a remarkable position in Europe as important trade partners of the Netherlands, such as England, France and Italy, were involved in this war against the Turks (Douglas, 2001). After the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Netherlands signed a friendship treaty with Turkey in 1924 (Knoop, 2017). Turkish president Atatürk and Dutch Queen Wilhelmina started a symbolic Turkish-Dutch association. An Association Agreement between the European Union and Turkey was signed in 1963. Hereafter Turkish guest workers came to Europe. From 1964 onwards, a total of 65.000 Turkish guest workers came in the following decade to the Netherlands (Çevik & Seib, 2015). In the years after the 1980 coup, a group of refugees came to the Netherlands. Nowadays there are more than 360.000 inhabitants of Turkish origin in the Netherlands (Yuret, 2016). Opening up the Turkish economy after the restoration of democracy in 1983 led to an intensification of trade relations. Ultimately, at the beginning of the 21st century, it would also be under the Dutch presidency that Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU would be used (Erkus-Öztürk & Terhorst, 2010). In 2012, the 400-year jubilee of friendship between Turkey and the Netherlands was celebrated. To celebrate this four centuries existence, many cultural-historical events were organized in both countries (Douglas, 2001). With a Dutch minister stating that "Turkey is one of the few countries with which the band has never been interrupted, not even during wars or whatever misery. That is very exceptional." Characteristic of the bond between the two countries is the large number of mutual visits by politicians and administrators that has traditionally taken place. Both countries have an embassy in the other countries as well as a consulate (Negrine, 2008).

The first crack in the generally good relationship started in 2011, when Turkish president Gül was offended by extreme-right Dutch party leader Wilders, who stated that a

leader of an Islamic regime was not welcome in the Netherlands, because the two countries did not share the same values (De Volkskrant, 2011). In 2013 it was Turkey that offended the Netherlands when prime minister Erdoğan criticized the fostering of a Turkish-Dutch child by lesbian parents during an official visit to the Netherlands (De Volkskrant, 2013). The prime minister and deputy prime minister of the Netherlands were appalled by this interference of Erdoğan (Çevik & Seib, 2015). On the 6th of January 2015 Dutch journalist Frédérique Geerdink got arrested in Turkey ‘on suspicion of spreading propaganda for a terrorist organization and negative statements against the government’, while the Dutch minister of foreign affairs was in Turkey for an official visit (Knoops, 2017). The arrest led to a shock wave in Turkey and the Netherlands. During her interrogation she was asked if she was a ‘foreign agent’. After a few hours, the journalist was released, making the Dutch government think this was a power-statement of Erdoğan (Taş, 2018).

In the context of a referendum on a constitutional amendment, several Turkish ministers campaigned in early 2017 for the ‘yes’ vote among Turkish citizens living in Europe (Tas, 2018). This led to a diplomatic conflict in various countries, which escalated rapidly in the Netherlands (Gunter, 2018). The Dutch government, with its own parliamentary elections coming up, declared campaigning undesirable and tried to ban Turkish ministers (Quamar, 2017). The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, wanted to give a speech on the 11th of March 2017 in a meeting at the Turkish consulate in Rotterdam. On the 6th of March, foreign minister Bert Koenders indicated in a note verbally that this would not be allowed. There was telephone contact between Koenders and Çavuşoğlu, as well as between prime ministers Mark Rutte and Binali Yıldırım (Gunter, 2018). The Dutch government stated in press releases that a visit was undesirable for reasons of public order enforcement; the Turkish community in the Netherlands was called upon from Turkey to participate en masse in the event. The Dutch and Turkish authorities were still discussing a compromise when the Turkish minister threatened to hit the Netherlands with political and economic sanctions if they would not obtain permission (Quamar, 2017). Subsequently, the Dutch government broke off the negotiations and withdrew the landing rights of the aircraft that the minister was on. The Turkish government responded by sending Kaya; minister of Family Affairs. She was already in Germany and went to Rotterdam by car, where a crowd of Turkish Dutch gathered at the consulate, summoned by the Union of European Turkish Democrats (Gunter, 2018). Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb, according to his own words ‘mised’ by the Turkish consul-general, made an emergency regulation and sent the mobile unit to keep the protestors in control. The police kept Kaya out of the consulate (where she would have received immunity) and asked

her to leave the Netherlands as soon as possible (Gunter, 2018). When Kaya refused, she was declared an undesirable person at the beginning of the night and brought to the German border under police escort. Turkey then instituted diplomatic sanctions against the Netherlands; in Rotterdam, riots broke out that night (Quamar, 2017). Earlier on the day, President Erdoğan had called the Netherlands fascist and nazistic. He also said that the Netherlands faced severe sanctions after the refusal and expulsion of the diplomats (Gunter, 2018). The Dutch ambassador, who was not in Turkey at the time, was not allowed to return to his post in Ankara, and the Turkish ambassador in The Hague was brought back to Turkey in June (Quamar, 2017). In March the mayors of the Turkish cities of Gaziantep and Denizli threatened to disrupt their town twinning relationships with the Dutch cities Nijmegen and Almelo if the mayors of the Dutch cities did not protest the Dutch government. Both the mayor of Nijmegen as the mayor of Almelo said to mourn this possible unilateral cancellation, but not to give in to the demands of the mayors of the Turkish cities (NOS, 2017). In February 2018, the Dutch cabinet decided to formally withdraw the ambassador to Turkey (Gunter, 2018).

The Netherlands and Turkey are restoring their mutual diplomatic relations. This means that there will be another Turkish ambassador in The Hague and a Dutch ambassador in Ankara (De Volkskrant, 2018).

2.2 Town twinning in international relation theory

Town twinning is a form of international relations (Defrance, 2008). International relation theory focusses on the conceptualization of international relations in order to research the phenomena (Brown, 2012). In the field of international relations theory there are three main concepts that are centralized (McClelland, 1959; Andrews, 2012). The three main concepts are: 1) Realism, 2) Pluralism/Liberalism and 3) Structuralism. Next to these three main approaches there are a number of smaller concepts specifying the main concepts and in some cases overlapping the different main concepts (Cobane, 1997).

The basic assumptions of the first main approach, realism, are: that a state is the most important actor in international relations, the state is a unitary actor, the state is a rational actor striving for maximization of self-interest and that safety is the most important theme in international relations (Rozpedowski, 2013). The realism approach studies the international relation between states in a world system that is existing in anarchy: the absence of a central authority that imposes norms and regulations on states. In this approach it is stated that every state has sovereignty. Meaning that the state itself is the highest authority and that there is no

higher power (Neufeld, 1993). Within the realism approach of international relation theory three aspects can be distinguished: a) statism, b) survival and c) self-help, respectively focusing on the components of nation states being the main actors in international relations, the component of an anarchistic world system and the component that only the state itself can guarantee its survival. Therefore this approach of the international relation theory focusses on power in the broad sense of the word (Kissane, 2012).

The basic assumptions of the second main approach, pluralism/liberalism, are: that next to states also non-state actors are of importance, the nation state is not a unitary actor, foreign policy is not only hard conflict politics but cooperation between actors is possible and next to national security social-economic themes are of importance (Dunne et al., 2013). There are two terms involved in the pluralism/liberalism approach, because the literature showed that some authors see the second main approach as more pluralistic and some as more liberalistic, but all notify that in the main approach pluralism and liberalism are highly related to each other (Solomon & Steele, 2016). Compared to the realistic approach the pluralistic/liberalistic approach has a more 'positive' point of view, focusing more on peaceful developments in the world and cooperation between different actors (state actors and non-state actors). The pluralism/liberalism approach therefore contains more concepts regarding upper-state integration (for example the European Union) and international cooperation (Schmidt, 2008).

The basic assumptions of the third main approach in international theory having its roots in Marxism, structuralism, are: that states and societies are part of the worldwide capitalistic system, international relations are seen from the historic perspective and the development of the capitalism, the most important relation between states and societies are of a domination and dependency kind and economic factors are determining international relations (Gills 1987). Emerged from Marxism, this approach focuses on the unequal aspect of international relations. Therefore, important fields in this approach relate to the development of capitalism and its consequences as is voiced in the dependency relation between 'core countries' and the 'third world' (Hoffman, 1988).

Because town twinning is a non-state actor (in most cases provided by municipalities), this form of international relations can best be ascribed to the pluralism/liberalism approach of international relations theory. Looking into this approach, the liberalistic side states that interaction is not limited to political and security actors (high politics) but also to economic and cultural actors (low politics) (Solomon & Steele, 2016). This can be achieved through commercial firms, organizations and individuals. Therefore, there are numerous opportunities

for cooperation (Andrews, 2012). This cooperation would create interdependence, because the actors of different sides depend on each other (Dunne et al., 2013). This interdependence in turn would contribute to peace, because both sides would benefit from peace. Therefore, international relations on every level are useful and need to be strengthened, liberalist argue (Andrews, 2012; Dunne et al, 2013; Solomon & Steele, 2016). Where the liberalism approach focuses on the ‘should’ part of international relations, post-liberalism emphasizes that states and actors are co-operating (Schmidt, 2008). As was posed by the liberalist, the post-liberalism approach stated that this cooperation is happening in order to ensure security. Distinguishing from liberalism, post-liberalism focuses more on political rationality. These (post) liberalistic views argue that town twinning is a form of low politics. Through economic and cultural exchanges of commercial firms, organizations and individuals, interdependence between the nation states is created through mutual interest and in that way security is ensured.

The theoretical framework for the Dutch-Turkish partnerships can be found through the international relations theory in the (post-)liberalistic approach. This approach relates to the research questions of this thesis in the following ways: in the theoretical approach it is argued that international relations of non-state actors, like town twinning relations, exist to create interdependence and therefore peace between different states. Town twinning originated in the post-World War II mindset of peace and reconciliation with the aim to enlarge understanding and friendship between different cultures. According to the theory, town twinning is therefore a low politics tool to facilitate economic and cultural exchange.

2.3 Town twinning in phases

As international theory shows that town twinning is a low politics tool to facilitate economic and cultural exchange, this can be linked to other town twinning theory. In the literature exists a model that describes the different phases of town twinning (de Villiers et al., 2006). This model states that twinning is not only a facilitator of cultural and economic exchange, but also a facilitator of exchange of ideas through educational and people’s exchange. As stated in the introduction, there are three phases in the development of town twinning (de Villiers et al., 2006). Although town twinning occurs in these three segments, the different phases are overlapping and interlinking. Meaning that entering a new phase the attributes of the last phase(s) are not lost, but the focus has shifted. The first phase is the ‘associative phase’, twinning based on friendship and cultural exchange (de Villiers et al., 2006). This phase started after the Second World War, with the intention that Europe should never be torn apart

again by war (CEMR, 2018). By overcoming cultural differences, through friendship and cultural exchange, the idea was that countries would see each other more as partners instead of enemies (Clarke, 2010). In this way making the gap between countries smaller and stimulate countries to cooperate with each other. By taking away differences and in such a way enlarging cooperation, twinning was used as a low politics tool to establish peace (CEMR, 2018). The first phase lasted till the 1970's (de Villiers et al., 2006). In the 1970's a phenomenon called 'globalization' was occurring (O'Rourke, 2008). Globalization is the process of interaction and integration between people, business and governments worldwide (Kilbourne, 2002). Globalization influenced town twinning by improving international transportation and communication to maintain relations (Clarke, 2010). Because of these improvements it became easier and more common for people to visit the place and people with whom they had a town twinning relationship (Jayne et al., 2011). Therefore twinning based on people's exchange and educational exchange occurred, where contact between people of different cultures brought the exchange of ideas (Clarke, 2010). This second phase is called the 'reciprocative phase' (de Villiers et al., 2006).

It is important to notice that although town twinning is part of the globalization process, it has also been influenced by globalization. Because of globalization people travel more and see different places, study abroad, therefore cultural and educational exchange is already happening without town twinning being involved (DeFrance, 2008). Technological improvements in communication, like the rise of internet, has influenced globalization and town twinning (Jayne et al., 2011). Because of the increase in the use of internet, more online communication now occurs (Wellman et al., 2001). Not only does the Internet make communication quicker and easier, communication is also becoming more diverse (Francisco, 2013). Internet therefore influences personal communication, social interaction and forms of expression (Wellman et al., 2001). Internet takes the obstacle out of time and location, therefore making it easier to 'stay in contact', not only with family and good friends but also with 'connections' who are more distant. Where geography in the past was a border for social interaction, it has become less of a constraint in a globalizing world with access to internet. In this way, on a digital level, cultural exchange and exchange of ideas therefore become transnational (Francisco, 2013).

The second phase ended around 2000 (Clarke, 2008). Around that time, entering the third phase 'Commercial exchange phase', the idea of having a marketplace for cities in which the role of a city as a gathering place for economic activities surfaced (Cremer et al., 2001). This so-called 'Strategic Management' of cities aims on forming strategic international

business links between member cities (de Villiers et al., 2006). This ‘Strategic Management’ aims on an enhancement of a city’s international profile and increase in global competitiveness (Clarke, 2008).

The model of phases shows the developments made in town twinning in a changing world (de Villiers et al., 2006). Without losing the attributes made in the former phase, town twinning can be seen as an evolutionary phenomenon in which it adjusts in an evolving world (Clarke, 2010). Regarding the theory of town twinning in phases, the hypothesis surfaces that a town twinning relationship in a further phase is more ‘established’ than a former phase and therefore less influenced by the state of a diplomatic relationship on a national level. Meaning that a town twinning relationship in the third phase may have more mutual interests due to further developed exchanges, creating more strengthened relations between the involved municipalities than a town twinning relationship in the second or first phase, and therefore may be more resistant to diplomatic friction on a national level.

3. Methods and Data

In this chapter the research design and research methods are discussed. In this part the choice for the research approach and research method of this study is explained. Subsequently the data collection is addressed, showing the process of obtaining the data for this research. At last is discussed how the data is assorted and structured in preparation for the analysis.

3.1 Research design

In academia there are generally two main approaches towards research (Cypress, 2018). These two main research designs are the qualitative research design and the quantitative research design. A qualitative research design focusses on understanding deeper underlying reasons, experiences, opinions and perspectives (Sofaer, 2002). The qualitative approach is therefore used to provide and describe insights in complex situations by delving into experiences of people (Duffy, 2012). To obtain such a detailed understanding, how and why questions are centralized in this approach (Sofaer, 2002). A quantitative research design focusses on uncovering relationships and patterns in order to make generalizations about a phenomenon (Cypress, 2018). Therefore, in a quantitative approach often a gathering of numerical data is used to measure and categorize a phenomenon. Through statistical analysis with this structural data, generalizations are made. Often surveys are used to gather large amounts of data and to generate outcomes on a broader scale (Sofaer, 2002). In some cases a

mixture of these main frameworks is used in which mixed methods are used to conduct research (Cypress, 2018). I believe that for this study the qualitative research design fits best. This research focusses on finding answers to the question why a same state of bilateral relations of the national level resulted in different outcomes for local Dutch-Turkish transnational relations. By looking into the experiences of local actors involved in these local relations an understanding is tried to be found of why some transnational Dutch-Turkish local relations ceased to exist, whereas others are still operative. Trying to capture the complexities of the situation, in-depth research into the situation is needed. Gaining specific insights in the transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Therefore, the qualitative design best fits this research, providing methods to look into the experiences of local actors involved get an understanding of the situation. Helping to find deeper underlying reasons in experiences, opinions and perspectives of involved different actors in the different relationships and in that way finding out why a same worsened state of bilateral relations on the local level resulted in different outcomes for the local level relationships. Within the qualitative research design there are different research methods that can be used to find an answer to the research questions (Duffy, 2012). Generally there a three qualitative methods that are mostly used in the qualitative approach (Cypress, 2018);

- 1) Participant observation; gathering data on people's behaviors in groups in their natural setting
- 2) Focus groups; gathering data on cultural norms in a group and generate a broad overview of perceptions and attitudes of that group
- 3) In-depth interviews, gathering data on individuals' perspectives, experiences and personal histories

As mentioned before, to find an answer to my research question, obtaining an in-depth understanding of the several local level Dutch-Turkish relationships is needed. Therefore the research method of in-depth interviews is chosen for this study. I believe this method is best applicable to this research, because it gathers broad information in perspectives and experiences of actors involved in the local Dutch-Turkish relationships. By conducting in-depth interviews the different transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships can be explored and insights from local actors involved in the relationships can be obtained. Through these insights the differences and overlap between the relationships can be seen, which will help to find out why in some cases Dutch-Turkish town twinning has ended while other Dutch-

Turkish partnerships are still operative. As is argued by Sofaer (2002) and Duffy (2012), in-depth interviews are most suitable to explore situations and finding out the ‘how’ and ‘why’ underlying these situations. By conducting in-depth interviews not only detailed information can be gained, but inside perspectives can be gained as well. In-depth interviews can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Cypress, 2018). The more structured an interview is, the more the interviewer determines the direction and the less freedom there is for the respondent to tell his or her story. In this research the ‘semi-structured’ form of interviewing is used, in this way the topics that are relevant for this study are discussed while the respondents have the space to tell about their experiences. This creates room for unexpected relevant details in a bigger storyline to be shared and in that way getting a better image of the overall situation (Cypress, 2018). An important critique regarding qualitative research and the research method of in-depth interviews is that it is quite subjective, this is due to the bias of the interviewer (Clifford et al., 2016). Meaning that the interviewer interprets the data, but the interviewer always has its own personal view in mind and therefore this influences the think process, the analyzation and the display of the results in the research.

Because respondents are sharing personal experiences, it is important to provide a safe and confidential atmosphere (Sofaer, 2002). The gathered data will only be used for this research and the respondents remain anonymous. To secure the anonymity of the respondents gender neutral names will be used (see appendix B, table 3).

3.2 Data collection

After establishing to conduct interviews, the process of finding out who the (formerly) involved actors of the relationships were, started. This was an online search, as I did not have connections in my personal social network involved in Dutch-Turkish local relations. The choice for reaching out to (formerly) involved actors of the different transnational local Dutch-Turkish partnerships is based on the conviction that involved local actors are key to obtaining information and insights of the relationships. Reason for this is because they were involved in the organization and exchanges between the concerned cities. Therefore providing the information needed to unravel the relationships and their discourses.

In the online search it became clear that the local transnational relationships were structured differently per municipality. Some municipalities involved local citizens while others did not. My aim was to interview municipal actors as well as citizens involved, to gain an as much detailed perspective as possible. Although I think the perspective from involved

actors on the Turkish side is valuable as well, due to practical reasons (money, time, to a certain extent a language barrier), I did not have the resources to include that part in this study. However, these in-depth interviews with Dutch local actors will provide insights of the Turkish side as well, through common shared experiences and interaction.

The data collection process occurred in different stages. After finding out online which municipalities and organizations had been or are still involved in transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations, I tried to contact the involved actors. At first I did this by contacting all municipalities with (former) transnational local Dutch-Turkish relations. From there finding respondents for this study took place differently per transnational local relationship. The municipalities of Alkmaar and Delft did not respond, therefore there are no respondents of those local Dutch-Turkish relationships. The municipality of Almelo referred me to the former members of the Almelo-Denizli committee. As formerly active involved actors in the Almelo-Denizli town twinning, I reached out to them. Wanting to hear their experiences and perspective of the former town twinning relationship. The three former members of the Almelo-Denizli committee wanted to participate in this research and therefore they formed the inside information source for this study for that town twinning relationship. The municipality of Amsterdam responded as well, stating they do not involve citizens in their partnership with Şisli. So getting insights of Amsterdam's partnership with Şisli leaned on the participation of an Amsterdam international office official. The municipality of Nijmegen referred me to the former advisory committee of the Nijmegen-Gaziantep town twinning relationship, where three of the five former members of the committee agreed to take part in interviews. The municipality of Haarlem did not respond to my outreach, but through finding the contact information online of the Haarlem-Emirdağ foundation, I managed to come into contact with the foundation. Resulting in a joint interview of two board members of the foundation. The primary goal of getting into contact with (formerly) involved actors to gain detailed information by their experiences and perspectives, in this way opening the path for the exploration of the transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships, succeeded. Noting that I did not interview both municipal actors as citizen actors for each relationship, I did manage to gain information of involved local actors of four transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Providing the data necessary to explore the topic of this research.

In short; after correspondence by e-mail and in some cases by phone, appointments were made to conduct the interviews. The outreach to Dutch local actors (formerly) involved in Dutch-Turkish local relations resulted in three respondents formerly involved in the town twinning committee of Almelo-Denizli, one municipal employee involved in the Amsterdam-

Şisli partnership, two foundation members of the Haarlem-Emirdağ foundation and three former members of the Nijmegen-Gaziantep town twinning committee. The interviews have been conducted in October, November and December of 2018.

To conduct the interviews I travelled to the different cities where the interviews were held in in different environments. In three cases the interview was conducted in a public space, in one case the interview was conducted in a study workplace at the Radboud University and five interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents. Although the environment conditions differ per interview, in my opinion the atmosphere surrounding all interviews was pleasant and the respondents seemed to speak freely.

3.3 Atlas.ti (Data analysis method)

The interviews were audio-recorded, these audio-records have been transcribed to create textual data. To analyze the data, the conducted interviews have been coded. By coding the data patterns and relations appeared which made it possible to answer the sub-questions. The technique to code the data will be discussed in the next paragraph. To code the data ‘computer-assisted qualitative data analysis’ (CAQDAS) has been used; ‘Atlas’. This is a digital program helping to arrange, reassemble and manage large bodies of textual data (Paulus & Lester, 2016).

3.4 Coding

As preparation for the analysis the data has been coded, to structure the data and to reveal the topics that come forward in the interviews. In the coding process I started with open coding. Breaking down the text and looking for distinct concepts and categories in the data. The list of all the codes are included in the appendix (see table 4). Most codes that came forward, were in line with the topics as given in the interview guide (see appendix A). But some codes only relate to a specific Dutch-Turkish local relationship. The ‘main codes’ coming forward in all interviews were in alphabetic order: ‘Cultural exchange’, ‘Experience local actors’, ‘Exchange of ideas’, ‘Financial exchange’, ‘Organizational structure’ and ‘Influence national level’.

After the open coding, I started with the ‘axial coding’. In this part of the coding process it became clear that many codes are subtopics of the six main codes. In the code table (in the appendix) can be seen which sub-codes are part of the main codes (group codes). The group codes therefore contain diverse content within the context of the code. The group code of ‘Cultural exchange’ contains for example topics of cultural activities, cultural exchanges and school exchanges. The group code of ‘Experience local actors’ contains topics of interaction within activities, as well as collaboration and attitudes towards the partnership.

‘Exchange of ideas’ embodies exchanges of knowledge as well as taking over ‘best practices’. ‘Financial exchange’ is specifically aimed on exchanges contributing to the local economy. The group code of ‘Organizational structure’ maintains topics such as the choice for entering a partnership, how the partnerships are structured, who is involved, how activities come about etcetera. ‘Influence national level’ embodies topics like ending of partnerships and interference of the Turkish political climate. These were all topics that were of central importance in most interviews. Some specific codes are used to describe a specific situation in a partnership. Overall the combination of these codes created a structural overview of the discourse of the several transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Altogether there was a lot of information regarding the town twinning relationships and the partnerships. Not all information in the interviews was used to construct the results. Selective coding was at last applied to the data to make a certain selection of the information gathered and to explicate the different transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships.

4. Results & Analysis

In this chapter I will at first discuss each Dutch-Turkish town twinning partnership in which the themes of ‘Organizational structure’, ‘Experiences of local actors’, ‘Cultural exchange’, ‘Exchange of ideas’, ‘Financial exchange’ and ‘Influences of the national level’ come forward. These were the main themes on which was focused in the interviews². These themes include different topics, as mentioned in the previous chapter. After the disquisition of all the separate partnerships, the results will be analyzed to find out why worsened bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey have led to termination of some Dutch-Turkish local level town twinning, while other Dutch-Turkish local level partnerships are still operative.

4.1 Almelo-Denizli

The town twinning relationship between Almelo and Denizli lasted from 1974 till 2017 and was founded because most Turkish guest workers living in Almelo originated from Denizli (Binnenlands Bestuur, 2018). I interviewed three members of the Almelo-Denizli committee; Billie, Cameron and Quincy. By interviewing them, a more detailed history of the town twinning relationship became clear. Quincy said: *“40 years ago there was an initiative by*

² To secure the anonymity of the respondents, fictional gender neutral names have been allocated to all participants. An overview of these fictional names can be found in table X in the appendix.

first generation Turkish guest workers. At that time Almelo was a 'Textile city' and a lot of textile workers came to Almelo; first the Spanish and Italians and later the Turkish and Moroccans. Most of the Spanish and Italians returned, but especially the Turkish stayed. That is why there is a large Turkish community in Almelo. Around 10% of the inhabitants of Almelo have a Turkish background, quite large. Maybe 6000, 7000 or 8000 people, but we cannot state exact numbers, because now there is already a third generation (...) you could say a mix of nationalities. At that time town twinning was in fashion, Almelo has town twinning relations with Preston, England and a German town, Iserlohn. So the municipality said that it would be nice to go for a Turkish partner city. They thought 'Where do the Turkish guest workers come from?'; Denizli, so therefore Denizli was chosen". Cameron did not address the historic background of the town twinning relationship, but Billie stated the following: "You see, the relationship was a close relationship. There are people living here who still have family members living in Denizli. So that was an important factor and it was the reason why the municipality stimulated town twinning with Denizli". From Quincy's and Billie's answers the choice for Almelo to partner with Denizli is confirmed; a large Turkish community living in Almelo with its roots in Denizli, Turkey.

4.1.1 Organizational structure

Talking about the historic background, the development of the town twinning relationship was addressed as well. But to fully understand the course of Almelo's and Denizli's town twinning relations, the organizational structure of the town twinning relationships will be explained. In particular how the twinning was organized and which actors were involved in the town twinning relationship between Almelo and Denizli. Asked about the organizational structure of Almelo-Denizli's town twinning Billie said: *"The committee in Denizli consisted of officials. So purely a municipal activity. In Almelo it was actually a club of private individuals who were supported by the municipality of Almelo. (...) We got a pot of money from the municipality."* Quincy said the following: *"We were a volunteer organization, we were volunteers. (...) There used to be one official representative; Gerda Wolters. She sat at our meetings on behalf of the municipality. (...) actually in Denizli there was no citizens based committee, the officials formed a committee that operated on behalf of the municipality. (...) We came up with proposals, we would like to carry out these activities. And then they said 'okay' and gave us a budget. We actually had a permit from the municipality, the good old years. About 10.000 euros per year, sometimes 15.000 or 20.000 euros. But in the last years we got 3000 euros."* Quincy indicates a change in subsidy money by the municipality of

Almelo, which is also addressed by Billie: *'There was an intense discussion in the city council whether the twinning committees had to remain. The other committees were less active. Less activities and exchange occurred there. But this was at that time not the case for the Denizli committee. (...) The new agreement was, you had to make a kind of planning, plan for the year, annual plan, we will do that with the money we get from the municipality. The intention was that you could then prove afterwards what you had spent by an annual report. Together with Iserlohn and Preston we then commonly got 10.000 euros. We got one third of that money.'* The organizational structure of Almelo-Denizli town twinning is different for each side. On Almelo's part there were two levels; an administrative level, the municipality, and an 'in practice' level in charge of organizing activities in the context of the partnership, formed by involved volunteers: the Denizli-committee. On Denizli's part there was a one-level organization, municipality officials, who both arranged administrative contact with the municipality of Almelo as well as consultation with the Denizli-committee regarding activities. In Almelo the Denizli-committee was subsidized by the municipality in Almelo, a subsidy of around 10.000 euros in the earlier years and an amount of 3000 euros in the last years.

4.1.2 Change in activity

The change in funds is not the only change that occurred in the more than 40 years existence of the town twinning relationship. Quincy points out: *'Town twinning relations between Almelo and Denizli existed over 40 years. In the 1980's relations were kind of on hold, due to the military coup in Turkey. Activities were stopped. In the 1990's new initiatives started again. You speak of a start over in the 1990's. (...) Although formal relations were cooled down for 10 years, the town twinning was not officially ended. Throughout those years informal contact carried on. (...) In the 1990's the town twinning flourished, but in the last 5-6 years town twinning relations have been of a reduced level.'* This drop in intensity is reconfirmed in the other interviews as well and had various causes. According to Cameron, an organizational reason from Almelo's side for this is the following: *'In the beginning somebody of the municipality of Almelo took part in the committee, but because of budget cuts at the municipality that was no longer the case. Another reason can be found in the development of Denizli, Billie stated: '(...) As the years progressed Denizli developed fast while Almelo was at a 'stand still', because the textile industry vanished. Denizli is now 10 times bigger than Almelo. In the beginning Almelo supported Denizli in various ways. Utilities such as fire trucks, hospital beds, everything on a social aspect that was scarce in Denizli,*

was refurbished here and sent to there. When Denizli started developing, they did not need this kind of support anymore.” Cameron also stated: “You see, Almelo has around 72.000 inhabitants. Denizli in the meantime has almost 1 million inhabitants, so in terms of size Denizli became too big for us. (...) Denizli exploded.” A change in funding on Almelo’s part also contributed to less activity, Quincy said: “The drop is due to obtaining less money from the municipality (...) the economic crisis played its role. We got less money, for each project application. We tried to find sponsors, businesses to invest, but that became also less and less.” Billie mentioned this as well: “(...) also because of money.” Billie also addressed an political organizational reason on Denizli’s part: “(...) due to Turkey’s political climate, new people were installed and some people were removed from their position. (...) After years of contact with certain officials, a lot of them left, a few were still there, but often got a different position. (...) The new people saw the town twinning relationship as a side issue, you know, whereas before there were people who worked full time on those kinds of relations.” These answers show that town twinning between Almelo and Denizli was blooming especially between 1990 and 2010, but due to different reasons in the last 6 years of the relationship there was less activity. This change in intensity of the town twinning is due to organizational changes both on Almelo’s as Denizli’s side, due to the development of Denizli as well as less money for the Denizli-committee in Almelo to spend on the town twinning relationship.

4.1.3 Experiences & Exchange

Although Billie, Cameron and Quincy state that the town twinning relationship had been of a lower intensity level in the last years of its existing, they all share a very positive overall experience regarding the town twinning relationship. Both in collaboration with the different actors as well as in the exchanges and activities that occurred. Regarding the collaboration with the administrative level in Almelo, Cameron and Billie mentioned respectively: “The municipality of Almelo gave us a lot of freedom, as long as we maintained a good relationship with our Turkish colleagues.” and “We absolutely had the support of the municipality in Almelo.” Also the collaboration with Denizli’s officials went well, Cameron said: “Collaboration with the colleagues in Turkey went really well, only sometimes you had to wait a little while to get a response. But that was because they were busy of course. At one point it was greatly improved because we had someone at the municipality of Denizli that was favorable to us. We also knew him personally, it is much easier to get a quick answer then.” Billie states: “Up until the town twinning ended, contact has always been good.”

Next to positive feelings regarding the collaborations with the municipality of Almelo

and Denizli's officials, Billie, Cameron and Quincy are enthusiastic about the exchanges and activities that occurred during the existing of Almelo's and Denizli's town twinning relationship. Numerous exchanges took place, most of them embracing cultural exchange and exchange of ideas. In combination with a high school in Almelo a recurring school exchange was established according to Quincy: *'We thought of a school exchange. (...) Around 1990/1992 the first school exchange occurred. A group of around 20 Dutch pupils, 14/15 years old, went to Turkey, taking for one week their classes in Denizli and taking part in many, various activities. It was a real success. (...) Taking regular classes, but also participating in workshops involving dance and music. Working together on writing papers and art pieces. All kind of classes in English, English was the communication language. Everything in English, the whole week. It was very educational for the Turkish children in Denizli, but also educational for the Dutch children. Also, in the evening they had to sleep at host families, where they especially learnt about the Turkish culture. Food for example. Dutch food is a bit boring compared to Turkish food. (...) Turkey is famous for its hospitality, well they got a taste of that hospitality, familiarization. But the languages, language development actually, within a week they were confidently speaking English. In the beginning it was a bit like 'Yes' or 'No', but afterward they were telling each other stories. I still hear that some of those youngsters, who are now 25-30 years old, still have contact with their Turkish classmates from the exchange. (...) Since 1992 there have been school exchanges. Every year we went to Denizli and they came to Almelo. In that way we exchanged 20 students each year. (...) When the exchange started I was not officially part of the Denizli-committee, but as a teacher I joined the exchange. The exchange fitted right in the town twinning relationship. After the first exchange the municipality said: Join the committee!'* Cameron brought the school exchange up as well: *'You see, the youth were really impressed by the hospitality, what being in a Turkish family is like. (...) They really have been immersed in Turkish culture.'* And he states that the school exchanges still leads to contact: *'I was in Denizli this year and I spoke to a few students who had been in Almelo during one of those exchanges. They are planning to revisit.'* Billie too mentioned the school exchange: *'When the school had an exchange with Denizli, we contributed a small amount to the pupils going on exchange (for their travel expenses). The school did a lot, but the Denizli-committee helped. In this way the collaboration lasted.'* Quincy mentioned another educational exchange: *'Also internships formed a success story. Students of tourism came here to do an internship for three months in a hotel or Dutch students went there.'* Besides this that Quincy mentions a couple of other activities: *'Denizli has a football club as well. We organized a joint winter*

stop. There were football matches here, a fun activity. (...) There have been musicians, live-music, folkdance. As well as a Dutch folkdance group who went to Turkey as a Turkish folkdance group that came here. We arranged the accommodations. Truly wonderful and unforgettable.” According to Quincy the Denizli-committee tried to create an infrastructure for interaction: “As a committee, we always looked for partners, who could be a partner of the local music school? Then we coupled music schools. (...) or we invited them, getting them acquainted so they could continue their own activities. That was our starting point, getting people acquainted, to prepare an infrastructure for interaction.” Aside from these cultural activities there were several projects aimed on exchanging ideas and learning from each other, but before delving into those exchanges I wondered and asked about how in their experience civilians came in contact with the activities and what they thought about it. Billie, Cameron and Quincy all pointed out that they received positive reactions, Cameron: “The people who came in contact with town twinning, through activities or exchanges, were all very positive.” Billie stated: Billie: “We have only got positive reactions, always.” Cameron and Billie differ on the subject of who were (not) interested in the town twinning relationship, respectively they said: “More people in Denizli know about the town twinning relations between our cities than the people here in Almelo. (...) There is a big group of people here with a Turkish background, they know about the town twinning, but amongst the Dutch it is sometimes disappointing. ” and “The people coming from there that came here to work (Turkish guest workers), I noticed they had little interest in the town twinning relationship. (...) I think that they cared for their family ties, not for the town twinning.” Quincy made a link between cultural exchange and understanding: “We got so many positive reactions, everybody was happy to see and to hear them. Here people have Turkish people living in the neighborhood or maybe as a colleague, but a real connection, getting acquainted for real did not occur so much. These kind of activities, in which the threshold is reduced, it is easier to get in contact with each other. (...) Understanding differences. Understanding for example the home situation. Turkish people take off their shoes in their house, they do not eat pork. Well, yeah, certain things, maybe some people have some general information, but through contact you learn from within. As well as the hospitality, you experience it when you’ve contact. (...) to experience it up close, leads to more understanding. (...) getting to know a different culture, a different religion, a different tradition. Prejudices becomes less. (...) Through these activities insights are given, awareness is created. When people for example think about women wearing headscarves, that it is repression of the woman, through contact you’ll find out the underlying reasons why women choose to wear a headscarf.” The people who came in

contact with the town twinning shared positive reactions. Cameron and Billie differ in their experience if citizens with a Turkish background in Almelo were more or less interested in the town twinning than citizens without a Turkish background. In Quincy's answer a link is made that throughout intercultural contact, people learn from each other and understanding increases. A mixture of cultural exchange and exchange of ideas. Several more examples of exchange of ideas were given as well, Cameron talked about a 'mark' for a park: *'We often focus on smaller parts in Denizli and often then an excursion takes place with a development, a park for example. Denizli for example has received the same 'mark' for a park, an English certification, that we also have here for a couple of parks.'* Which Quincy addressed as well: *'A green flag. A park needs to fulfill a couple of criteria, experts will investigate the park, and if the park meets the criteria it obtains a green flag. That is something that Almelo contributed and Denizli has this now as well.'* And Cameron noticed: *'And that has to do with us having an English partner city, Preston. Originally it comes from there. So it was introduced here and passed on to Denizli.'* According to Cameron exchange of ideas did not only occurred in an official setting, but also along the way: *'(...) We have a nice little system here that when you are waiting you hear 'toktok' and you know it is your turn. In the meantime Denizli got this as well, I am not saying they got the idea from here, but they sure had their eyes open during their visits.'* An example of official 'exchange of ideas' is given by Quincy: *'As the committee we came with an proposal. (...) Here there is separation of waste, policy surrounding waste processing, a success story. Separation of green waste, residual waste, paper. In Denizli this was an unknown territory. This idea, these kinds of ideas we transferred to Denizli. Beautiful examples. One time we went with the Denizli-committee and officials of the municipality of Almelo, with their knowledge and experience, to share this with our Turkish colleagues. Gaining energy from waste. They used to dump the trash, but here we already knew how to gain energy from it. That was adopted by the municipality of Denizli.'* Quincy gave two examples regarding educational exchange of knowledge as well: *'Here in the Netherlands we also have high-quality special needs education. A former committee member initiated a project that sets up a special needs education high school in Denizli. (...) Money was raised and the school was built there. It still exists.'* and *'There were 2 primary schools, one in Almelo and one in Denizli. We set up an environment-education program. How to cope with waste paper and waste in general, glass, sorting waste. A beautiful project.'* Billie and Cameron both addressed the reciprocity of the exchange stating respectively: *'The exchange was more one sided.'* and *'You could say the exchange was more one-way from Almelo to Denizli.'* As seen in the different examples, the

exchange of ideas mostly addresses knowledge transfer regarding the topics of environment and education. Almelo's and Denizli's town twinning relationships was not so much focused on financial exchange in the sense of stimulating relations on a business level. There was one example both Billie and Cameron as Quincy addressed, the Chamber of Commerce: *'We had contact with the Chamber of Commerce', 'We tried to link the Chambers of Commerce of both cities.'*

4.1.4 Ending of town twinning & Influence national level

The last topics addressed in the interviews were the ending of the town twinning relationship and the influence of the national level. Views on a possible future for Almelo's and Denizli's local relations surfaced as well. The answers differed when looking at the possible influence of the local relations on the bilateral relations. Cameron was positive: *'I think the town twinning has positively influenced the bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands. For example by the educational exchanges. (...) As a colleague you have an important role. You do not only talk about school, but also about freedom of speech etcetera. You hope, that your idea, (...) contributes.'* Billie saw this differently: *'I think the town twinning had no influence at all on the bilateral relations. (...) They are pieces, pieces from a country with another city. You see, I for example do not think The Hague was interested in Almelo sustaining relations with Denizli.* However all of them thought the national level influenced the local level, as Billie said: *'I do think the national level influenced the local level. Organizations in Denizli obtained very clear instructions when looking into what happened in Denizli over the last years. The influence in schools, especially schools on a higher level. For example in the classrooms there are now pictures of Erdoğan where there used to be pictures of some Turkish heroes. (...) It was remarkable that everything that came from Almelo was still there. Nothing had been removed. Not in the schools and not in the streets. Well, maybe it has been removed after the termination, but we do not know that, we haven't been there as a committee afterwards. (...) In the past you could discuss more topics. I think now we would be more careful, afraid to touch a sensitive topic.'* Billie also thought of their last visit and told: *'The last visit in Denizli, in 2016, was extremely enjoyable and we were received very warmly. (...) nothing indicated that they even wanted to stop the town twinning relationship. We went home satisfied.'* The termination of the town twinning relationship surprised Billie, Cameron and Quincy, and resulted in the end of the existing of the Denizli-committee as well. Billie said: *'The deadly strike for the committee was the letter written by the mayor of Denizli to the mayor of Almelo. Because of the conflict that occurred in Rotterdam. (...) The mayor of*

Almelo sent a decent letter back in which he stated he mourned the decision, because the fact is that there are still a lot of people living here who are connected with Denizli. He regretted that the town twinning was ended this way, but that he could not do anything else than accept. Case closed. (...) The town twinning was ended by Denizli.’ Quincy explained why the partnership was ended: *‘After the conflict in Rotterdam the minister of Family Affairs Kaya went by car to Germany and flew back to Turkey. (...) Immediately after the incident she arrived in Denizli and called the city council together. She told about the tensions and how the Dutch treated her: ‘I could not go to the bathroom, I was not allowed to pee, I was not even allowed to drink water, so unhuman and against women.’ It was a very negative speech. At that time the municipality said unanimously: ‘Almelo is a Dutch municipality, we have a partnership, we will end it immediately.’ (...) Without thinking, without consultation, without asking to which extent the information was true. Unanimously, although there are different parties in the council, they decided to end it. (...) Negative advertising. (...) The mayor sent a formal letter to our mayor to terminate the partnership effective immediately. Our mayor in Almelo responded decently, very political correct: ‘We mourn this decision and regret that it ended in this way.’ In the papers Turkish-Dutch stated that they felt like a child from divorcing parents. (...) As well as Turkish citizens in Almelo as Dutch citizens in Almelo regretted the decision. We invested so much time, money, knowledge. Sleepless nights. And like that everything is gone, without consultation, without asking questions. Well yeah, now contact is normalizing again. (...) New ambassadors have been appointed.’* The answers differ if there is a possible future for a local town twinning relations between Almelo and Denizli. According to Billie if it were up to the people the town twinning would not have been ended: *‘If it was up to the people, the town twinning would still exist. (...) It is painful it ended. When I look back I say: ‘I would do it again!’ Absolutely.’* Cameron is uncertain for a restored town twinning relationship in the future: *‘I do not know if the town twinning relationship will be restored in the future. If I look at myself, well I am not the youngest anymore. Sure I am enthusiastic, but the difficulty would be to restore a well-functioning committee. (...) A restart takes energy. (...) And in the end it is based on volunteers’* Quincy is hopeful and stated: *‘Almelo, the municipality, never closed the door. (...) I think that on the human level, the individual level, contact will remain. Especially contacts made in the last years of the town twinning relationship. (...) Those remain of value, they will stay contributing to understanding. (...) I still here positive messages. (...) Although individuals would like to restore the local relations, I do not know how sensitive the political issue still is. (...) Breaking something is easy. Restoring something that was broken costs much more*

energy. But I stay positive.” These answers show that the town twinning relationship between Almelo and Denizli was ended by Denizli. This official termination is due to interference of the national level and caused by the diplomatic conflict.

4.2 Amsterdam-Şişli

Up until recently, the municipality of Amsterdam had two local Turkish partnerships. The partnership with the municipality of Kocaeli started in 2000 and ended in 2018. The partnership with the municipality of Şişli, a submunicipality of the metropolis Istanbul, started in 2012 and is still active today. I interviewed Luca, a municipality official who is a coordinator of Amsterdam’s international policies. In the interview we mainly focused on the partnership with Şişli. Although the partnership with Kocaeli was briefly discussed as well. Before going into the specific partnerships, it became clear that Amsterdam has a policy goal in regard to international cooperation. Luca declared: *‘Four years ago a policy memorandum has been established by the city council and the administration wherein priorities are stated. (...) Whereby nowadays we do not only look into where we as Amsterdam want to be active, but we focus more on the themes we want to be active in. If we want to partner with a certain city, we do this on the basis of reciprocity. We want to obtain knowledge and we of course want to distribute knowledge. But at the end of the day you want for a partnership that Amsterdam and its citizens gain something of it, that is the most important goal. In our job we always keep this goal in mind. What does Amsterdam gain from this partnership. It is not the*

case that we are development workers, who do good things everywhere in the world. Whether the partnership is economical based or about other issues that are important for the city. Important issues like climate-adaptation, but also prevent polarization, radicalization, those are issues in which we collaborate with cities all over the world. So the starting point really is what are the challenges Amsterdam faces and how can we thereby use international cooperation. That being said, it does not mean we never do anything solidary based. But the goal is reciprocity.’’

4.2.1 Kocaeli

Before going into the partnership with Şişli, Luca mentioned the partnership with Kocaeli ended. The partnerships with Kocaeli and Şişli have been quite different. Keeping in mind the international policy goal, it becomes more clear why the partnerships are different and why the partnership with Kocaeli has ended. Luca stated: *‘‘The nature of collaboration with Kocaeli and Şişli are quite different. With Kocaeli we entered a partnership, which is ended by the way, the agreements that we had made came to an end and on both sides there was no ambition to continue this partnership. But the reason for entering this partnership was an earthquake that happened in Kocaeli almost 20 years ago. At that time there was a call for help from Kocaeli to the rest of the world. Initially the fire department of Amsterdam responded to this call for help. The fire department organized provided a lot of training over the years, because the role of the fire department in Amsterdam is of course bigger than only putting out fires. They are an important partner in risk management and prevention. The knowledge of our fire department and the role they have here in our municipality in disaster prevention, made them work together on this topic with their Turkish colleagues. Had the earthquake not find place, had the call for help not been there, I believe we would not have entered a partnership with Kocaeli. Because our aim is to focus on capitals or cities who are similar in dealing with certain issues and have a similar background. Especially in the last few years the focus in partnerships has shifted to the content. A shift to cities in which the goal of reciprocity returns, which was not the case with Kocaeli. So to get back to why the partnership with Kocaeli ended, there were formal reasons, but there is also a trend of a decrease in the grey area, and the world becoming more black and white. And this is what we also see in international collaboration generally and how we can work together with cities. Especially places in the world where religion plays an important role, like Kocaeli. Kocaeli is, certainly if you compare it to Şişli, a very strict religious city. This shows in their administration as well. So I believe in the end it contributed to ending the partnership, not*

only the coupe and all that happened during that period, but a longer trend that has been occurring. So more a trend of choosing to which side you belong. (...) The fire department did all they could. And we noticed that in different areas we tried to collaborate, and even though the partnership might not be reciprocal, we always want a clear question and have thrust in the commitment of the involved actors over there. There was a clear need in Kocaeli regarding the area of youth, but at the moment a city cannot show us what they are going to do with the advice or how they will implement it, we will not collaborate. So eventually that is the reason the partnership formally came to an end.'' The partnership with Kocaeli started after Amsterdam's fire department responded to a call for help after an earthquake to place in Kocaeli. Over the years the partnership was mostly based on trainings by the fire department of Amsterdam to their Turkish colleagues, amongst other things training in risk management. Although it was not the official reason for ending the partnership, the goal of reciprocity was not met in the partnership with Kocaeli. Officially the partnership ended because the role of Amsterdam's fire department was fulfilled and in possible new areas of partnering, like youth affairs, there was no ambition on both sides to continue the partnership.

4.2.2 Organizational structure

The partnership with Şişli has a different origin than the partnership with Kocaeli. The partnership with Şişli fits in the policy goal of reciprocity. To show how this partnership is structured it is at first important to know how the partnership started. Luca said the following: *'Şişli is a different story. The late mayor 'van der Laan' had a personal connection with the former mayor of Istanbul, Topbaş. They met with each other a couple of times and had some good discussions about mutual issues our cities were facing. Some delegations did go to Istanbul. But at a certain point it became clear that when decisions needed to be made, the level of metropolis Istanbul, where Topbaş was responsible for, was to diverse, also in terms of responsibilities. I am not necessarily referring to the scale, because Amsterdam also works together with Tokyo and Sao Paulo, both cities that are way bigger than Amsterdam, but in the governance level. In Istanbul there are sub municipalities that have direct responsibilities, responsibilities in areas where they have questions about regarding certain issues. So it was decided then, and Şişli was quite keen on working together with Amsterdam, we would partner together on the level of the sub municipality with Şişli. (...) Şişli is a sub municipality that is kind of special in a way, because they have a progressive mayor. A mayor not belonging to the AK-party, he is more liberal in different ways and therefore maybe more suiting to a city as Amsterdam. (...) I believe it makes the collaboration easier than working*

with another sub municipality or another city in Turkey. (...) It is about having an open attitude for different ideas.” Talking about the partnership with Şişli Luca mentioned the communication aspect of the collaboration: *“Communication has been quite complicated, especially one on one communication. When you see the Turkish colleagues again, you know all is good. Even if the language aspect with the international office in Şişli is still an obstacle. You notice that the culture we have here to email and wanting to work very efficiently, the difference in this work approach, it stays difficult. But that is the case in almost all our international relations. (...) You need regular contact in person to maintain a good working relationship.”* The role of the Dutch consulate in Istanbul came forward as well: *“What is also interesting is that we work closely together with our embassies and consulates. That is certainly important in Istanbul, especially in the time when bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey were tense. The Dutch consulate in Istanbul really pleaded to us to keep contact with Şişli ongoing. (...) The consulate has local forces as well who know the Turkish language and can help us in that regard to clear a misunderstanding or something like that.”* The partnership occurs on an administrative level, this became clear when Luca said: *“There are no exchanges of citizens resulting of our partnership with Şişli. That is generally more something what happened the past, because we have a quite large Turkish community. And there is always involvement of the communities of Surinamese, Moroccan or Turkish communities with their country of origin. It is important that those initiatives are there, but what we do is of a different order. We want to get the professionals in touch with each other.”* These answers show that the partnership is based on reciprocal knowledge exchange in how to deal with certain issues both parties are facing. The organizational structure is a one-level structure: the administrative level. In this partnership the international offices of both Amsterdam as Şişli are working together. Although the collaboration goes well, there is a language barrier and regular contact in person is important. The Dutch consulate in Istanbul supports this partnership and is helping out with the language barrier.

4.2.3 Exchange

This partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli focusses on the exchange of ideas. Because this is done on a professional level, there is no exchanges on the citizen level. Although there is financial exchange, which is briefly mentioned as well, it is not the main aim of Luca’s department. Different examples of exchange of ideas have been given, Luca for example said: *“It often starts with inviting people to Amsterdam to show them how we do things over here.*

For example we invited a delegation of Şişli in 2016 to attend the EuroPride. That is of course an important theme for Amsterdam, human rights in general not only LGBTI rights. We show what happens in the city and explain to the delegation our role, the role of the municipality. It is not the role of the municipality to organize parties, but to organize the content debate surrounding the canal parade and other activities. (...). I think the common thread in our partnership is which role the municipality takes. Because we do not have a lot of money, we do not have millions to spend on projects or to build something. We want to show what our role as a municipality is and we want to learn from others how they act as a municipality. Who do they involve regarding issues as climate adaptation and how do they involve their citizens?’ Luca mentioned policy exchange as well: *‘Policy exchange has been occurring. For example when we invited a delegation for the Europride. After that colleagues of the GGD, a Dutch governmental public health institute, went to Şişli because they have a transgender home over there. They were struggling with how to deal with this issue as a governmental organization. There were all kinds of healthcare issues. How can you manage that citizens of Şişli understand what is going on? So we sent people there who explained what we have in terms of policies regarding that theme. People working in health care went to discuss this team. But we looked into it as well, we do not have a transgender house in Amsterdam. Would that work in Amsterdam and how?’* As mentioned before the Dutch consulate in Istanbul supports the partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli, this is also seen in the following example Luca gave: *‘There is an exchange coming up regarding the topic of ‘Livable City’, which is hosted by the Dutch consulate by the way. Well actually the meeting about ‘Livable City’ was started because we invited Şişli and some other cities for a festival in Amsterdam. The ‘We make the city’ festival, an important aspect was a conference about livable cities and we invited a couple of partner cities. The event, now hosted by the consulate, is a retinue of that. After the ‘We make the city’ festival, Şişli got insights in how we handle public spaces and how we involve our citizens. They asked us to come to Şişli and told us they wanted to discuss and to change ideas on how to handle the matter and get more information about how we manage it over here. So an urban planner and somebody involved in public spaces from our side are going there. To see how we would do it. But also to look into how Şişli manages their public space. And this comes together in an event which is hosted by the Dutch consulate in Istanbul.’* Although there are numerous exchanges of ideas in different areas, not all are successful as Luca stated: *‘On paper the partnership is quite*

broad. Themes like repurposing heritage, public space, healthcare, LGBTI and human rights are discussed. Even the 'Cruyff Court'³ was mentioned. Not on every theme the partnership is as successful. (...) In regards to the 'Cruyff Court' we said to Şişli that if they wanted a 'Cruyff Court' they should make space for it. It is important to make space in the city so youth can meet up. And sports can be used to discuss certain social issues. For example to let girls participate. Or to educate youths to be a coach, which happens at the Cruyff Courts. Learning the youths that they can help their own peers. Very positive, but the condition is that there needs to be room for it in the public space. (...) In this case it did not work. Well then it stops, if they cannot create the space, then we are not starting the process of getting people here and showing how to manage this project. So the commitment on the other side is very important before we start something.' Luca mentioned the following about financial exchange: 'We have a big interest of Amsterdam businesses in Turkey. But my colleagues of 'Amsterdam business' mostly handle this theme. Although there is less financial exchange now due to the lira crisis, there are still a lot of Turkish companies in this region and we keep in contact with them. (...) Our aim is attracting businesses to Amsterdam. Corendon, banks, you name it. Where we as a city are really pitching Amsterdam abroad. If you want a European headquarters or a headquarter outside of Turkey, come to Amsterdam. (...) This is what we can offer you. We also support Amsterdam businesses who have an internationalization ambition, this is a more recent development though. Amsterdam is also a 'denim city' and denim is quite big in Turkey. We really try to aim on the sustainability part of the market, Eco denim, to serve that specific part of the market. So we go and see what we can do in that area. Is there something for Amsterdam parties to do something there? Both sides need to be gaining something. (...) Reciprocity fits the description of this partnership.'

The partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli mainly focus on reciprocal exchange of ideas in different areas like human rights, health care, sustainability and youth affairs. Financial exchange occurs as well, although there is a special department at the municipality who in charge of economics sector. Cultural exchange is not the focus in the partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli.

4.2.4 Influence national level

In the interview with Luca the influence of worsened bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey was discussed as well. Luca said: 'I think since the events of 2017

³ Cruyff Court is a project by the Johan Cruyff Foundation providing in cooperation with municipalities small football fields in neighborhoods to facilitate a safe space for sports and recreation with room for social development (Cruyff Foundation, 2018).

the situation regarding international collaboration has become more difficult in Turkey, also for the city-level. Because in Turkey cities have a lot of responsibilities, so they know the importance of working together with cities outside of Turkey. I believe pressure is coming from the central government. The fact that so many cities wrote letters to cities outside of Turkey to terminate collaboration. I do not know if that was a free choice. But I do not know that for sure. We at least did not receive a letter. Surely not from Şişli, but neither from Kocaeli. Nothing happened. But of course you can see the liberty that cities have if the political climate in a country is good. There is more freedom than when the political climate is bad. This is especially the case for Turkey.’ For Şişli Luca specified: *‘Şişli left it open, they said, the fact that on the national level relations have worsened does not mean that we want to stop working together. In the contrary, we like to keep this partnership going. The Dutch consulate contributed positively as well. The consulate also went to the mayor of Şişli. You do not have to do that because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asks you too. They do it because the consulate sees as well how important that contact is. And we wanted to stay in contact as well. So we can support the partnership that we have.’* The worsened states of bilateral relations did not influence the partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli. Although there might have been pressure from the Turkish government, both Şişli and Amsterdam want to keep the partnership going. The Dutch consulate in Istanbul contributed to this reaffirmation as well.

4.3 Haarlem-Emirdağ

The partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ started in 1995 as a result of involving the Turkish community of Haarlem in the events regarding the 750th anniversary of Haarlem. I interviewed two members of the Haarlem-Emirdağ foundation: Jaimie and Kris. Jaimie stated: *‘In 1995 Haarlem celebrated its 750th anniversary. The mayor at that time wanted to involve the 7000 citizens with a Turkish background, mostly originating from Emirdağ, in the events. Therefore some of us came together and the Haarlem-Emirdağ Foundation was called into life. Citizens with a Turkish background as well as ethnically Dutch were involved in starting the foundation. So the first activity we ever did was a photo exhibition on Emirdağ during the*

celebrations of the anniversary. It was the beginning of many more activities.’’ The inducement for starting the foundation and entering a partnership therefore started because of a need of the mayor at the time to involve the Turkish community.

4.3.1 Organizational structure

During the course of the interview Jaimie and Kris, both board members of the Haarlem-Emirdağ Foundation, explained the form of the partnership. Kris stated: *‘‘The partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ is not an official town twinning relationship. Haarlem has official town twinning relationships with a German town, Osnabrück, and a French town, Angers. Haarlem and Emirdağ have a friendly partnership. In the context of this partnership there is our foundation which is supported financially by the municipality. We get subsidy from the municipality to organize activities. So we have the support of the municipality, but there have also been exchanges on the administrative level. So officials of the municipality of Haarlem and officials of the municipality of Emirdağ visited each other as well. (...) You need the support of the mayor and the administrative level. Because if they support you, contact runs more smoothly which benefits the activities.’’* Jaimie mentioned the administrative level as well: *‘‘ From 1995 up until 2010 there have been many activities and exchanges. And every two years there was a visit from the municipality of Emirdağ to Haarlem. Or let me explain it like this: one year, for example 2007, the mayor of Haarlem went to Emirdağ and then in 2008 the mayor of Emirdağ came to Haarlem. So there were mutual visits.’’* The partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ comprises mutual visits on the administrative level as well as, on Haarlem’s side, a foundation organizing activities and exchanges subsidized by the municipality. The role of the foundation in the partnership was mentioned as well, Kris said: *‘‘Our role then is intermediary, a kind of broker-role. For example the project waste processing. We went to waste processing companies here and to the municipal waste processing organization. And the organizations here in charge of waste processing have been connected with organizations there, so they could make arrangements. (...) Our role is to match the organizations.’’* Jaimie mentioned: *‘‘We started to match organizations. Let them get to know each other, bring them into contact, and then let them operate independently. For Turkish organizations it can be quite hard to come in contact with Dutch organizations, because there is a language barrier. And vice versa for the Dutch organizations. But with our support, we can bring them together so a collaboration can be started. (...) So we linked citizens and companies on both sides and sometimes we went along on exchanges as well. To help out with the language barrier.’’* Next to a language barrier, there was sometimes also a

cultural challenge, Jaimie recalled: *‘I remember one time the mayor of Emirdağ wanted to visit Haarlem, on short notice. But the municipality of Haarlem prefers that those visits are planned weeks before they occur. It therefore was sometimes a bit of a struggle to plan for those visits. But in the end, although it was sometimes difficult, they always managed to find time for each other. ’* Kris remembered this as well and stated that cultural differences can also be a strength: *‘What I find so special about this foundation is that the board members are a mix of people with and without a migration background. In a transnational partnership this cultural mixture is a great advantage. ’*

4.3.2 Change in activity

As briefly mentioned above, the partnership was active between 1995 and 2010. Although the Haarlem- Emirdağ foundation still exists and the partnership has not ended, there have been no exchanges after 2010. A reason for this is mentioned by Jaimie: *‘Because of budget cuts and reorganizations there is no department of international relations anymore at the municipality of Haarlem. The specific function overseeing the partnerships has disappeared. In, I believe 2008 or 2010, the function had been accommodated under a more general department due to a reorganization, but I do not know exactly which department. But I have the feeling that now the municipality does not know exactly what to do with this partnership. Both municipalities are a bit passive regarding the partnership and then, well, then it dies.’* Kris said: *‘After 2010 the foundation went to sleep, or actually there was no input anymore. Because our connections over there were mostly volunteers, just like us. And after a couple of years people are becoming less involved. That happened over there, but here as well.’* Regarding the volunteer aspect Jaimie stated: *‘Look there is a cultural difference, volunteer work is quite popular in the Netherlands. A lot of people participate. And if the Dutch sign up to be a volunteer they state how often and when they are available. For example twice a week on Monday and Thursday. They will be present on those days. And if the person cannot or does not want to come, they will let us know on time so we know and have the time to find another volunteer. But in the Turkey dropping out is a more sensitive topic. It starts with a lot of enthusiasm and they like to see quick results. But quick results do not exist in volunteer work, especially in this type of voluntarism, it takes time to organize activities and exchanges. So in other words, for them it takes too long and then they drop out. For the people that quit over there you have to find new volunteers, to prepare them and fill them in on what we have already done. So it complicates collaboration if the people you were in contact with in Emirdağ stop volunteering in activities and exchanges. (...) And in Turkey it is hard to find*

volunteers, very difficult. Because there is not the same volunteer mentality as is here. It is not that they do not want to, but for example they help out a lot in the case there is a birth or a funeral or something like that. They will help out a lot, but that is temporary and not permanently. It is a big difference.” Kris mentioned the volunteer aspect as well: “At one time there was a foundation in Emirdağ we had close relations with, it was an environment foundation. They had a lot of volunteers. They were very interested in our activities, so we worked together with them. And that collaboration went well. But they were quite young and for study purposes or jobs they moved away. It is hard to keep the collaboration going when your colleague volunteers on the other side are not actively involved in Emirdağ anymore. (...) So actually there are two periods, the active period from 1995 up until 2010 and afterwards when there were no activities. But we are thinking to start something again.” The reasons for the partnership being inactive since 2010 are twofold. On the one side there was a reorganization of the international department of the municipality of Haarlem. On the other side there had been less input of the Haarlem-Emirdağ foundation and there were difficulties regarding having volunteers on the Turkish side helping with activities and exchanges.

4.3.3 Exchange

During the active years of the partnership, 1995-2010, there have been different exchanges. Cultural exchanges and exchange of ideas, Kris recalled: “There have been exchanges in waste processing, health care and education. We have matched a lot of sectors. Bringing together citizens of Haarlem and citizens of Emirdağ, letting them work together on different projects. We were the intermediate factor.” Jaimie mentioned a cultural exchange: “There was an elaborate art exhibition. It started in Haarlem and afterwards it was displayed in Emirdağ. But it went even further. The exhibition also went to Eskişehir, The Hague and Brussels. A broad collaboration including a variety of artist and municipalities.” Kris remembered another cultural activity: “Our role as intermediary came forward again at an artistic event. There is an organization here ‘Kunst zij ons doel’, an artist organization. They arranged expositions in regard of the partnership as well. We arranged the contacts.” Jaimie mentioned an environmental project: “There was a project regarding the environment, a program aimed on nature, I believe it was called Ekokids. A school exchange of a primary school here in Haarlem and a school in Emirdağ. I think those kids learned together about the environment and being responsible for keeping the area where you live clean.” Kris recalled: “There were also activities aimed on gaining from each other, exchange of ideas. For example the waste processing project. That was a project aimed at the waste process in

Emirdağ. Waste separation was introduced, for example different colored trash bags to separate trash etcetera. A beautiful project. Knowledge exchange based, to learn from each other how we both manage those issues. (...) Another example which I really liked are the ideas that were picked up by the other party on exchanges, for example: gardens at school. School gardens are quite common here, but they took the idea with them and started to introduce gardens at school as well. Because they visited a primary school here and saw those gardens. Beautiful how those things can go. (...) I also remember an exchange of the 'Nova college', of the nursing education. I believe they had a couple of exchanges'' Jaimie also mentioned this exchange: 'There was a question about how the nursing education was constructed over here and how it was constructed in Turkey. In Turkey the nursing education is quite broad, a lot of general knowledge. While in the Netherlands the nursing education is more specialist oriented. For example focusing more on the matter of nutrition or on assisting at surgery. To compare the differences in the education some students from the Nova college went to Turkey. And they learned about the differences in their education and saw it was useful to take over some of each other's practices. Quite interesting.' Besides these exchanges Jaimie and Kris briefly mentioned the topic financial exchange, respectively they said: *'The mayor of Haarlem one time went to Emirdağ to see the industrial area. Showing possible opportunities for Dutch businesses. But that did not lead to something concrete.'* and *'There was also a marble business, I believe a business in marble tiles, but I do not think it lead to something.'* During the time the partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ was active, there have been several exchanges of different kinds; artistic, environmental and educational.

4.3.4 Influence national level & Future

Although the partnership has been inactive since 2010, it was not officially ended. Asking about the possible influence of worsened bilateral relations Jaimie said: *'I haven't noticed the influence of the national level in the partnership. In Emirdağ there is still a park which is called the Haarlem- Emirdağ park. In my opinion the people of Emirdağ are more down-to-earth than in other Turkish cities. (...) And a lot of people from Emirdağ have migrated to foreign countries. Almost 50% of people affiliated with Emirdağ live abroad. I think the citizens still residing in Emirdağ therefore are not so easily influenced by political pressure of the Turkish government. Almost all the citizens of Emirdağ have relatives outside of Turkey. The idea I got is that the citizens and municipality of Emirdağ thought: 'What happens between Rutte and Erdoğan. it is something between them.'* Although the activity of the

Haarlem- Emirdağ foundation has quieted down, Kris and Jaimie tap into future plans, Kris said: *“We have plans for the future, regarding elderly care. There are a lot of first generation Turkish migrants here who commute back and forth to Turkey. But they are old and would like to stay there. Well that is not a problem, but a challenge. (...) Not only the safety of the elderly is something to keep in mind, but also health care insurances and other financial bureaucratic laws. It is a challenge.”* Jaimie stated: *“The project regarding care of commuting elderly is a complicated project. It becomes especially hard when you have an elderly couple where one person dies. Because those elderly couples need each other, in their cases the man cannot look after himself in regards to cooking, doing laundry etcetera, because his wife has done it all his life. And for the woman, the woman would not feel safe. And is afraid to commute by herself. So for those first generation elderly commuters there is an interdependency. And we want to help them. Those people do not really want to grow old in the Netherlands, but they are scared to go to Turkey as well. It is a grey area leading to isolation. They are so lonely and isolated. So we have tried to look for a retirement home here. But that is quite difficult. (...) So as long those couples are together, they are fine, but when one of them dies they become isolated.”* Kris is determined for the future: *“I believe the partnership should continue, but it needs to become more active again. (...) I think it needs to continue to exist, because there is so much to learn from each other.”* The partnership has not been influenced by the worsened state of bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey. This might be because of a lot of ‘outside’ connections, Emirdağ and its citizens do not feel pressured to take a stance. But it could also be because the partnership has been inactive since 2010, so relations between the municipalities and its citizens have been of a reduced level. Nevertheless the topic of elderly commuting first generation Turkish migrants is an incentive for the foundation to activate the partnership once again.

4.4 Nijmegen-Gaziantep

The town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep started in 2006, a relatively young partnership, and the relations cooled down in 2017. In the literature the reason for a partnership with Gaziantep did not come forward clearly. The choice for a partnership with Gaziantep became more evident in the interviews I conducted with three members of the Nijmegen- Gaziantep committee; Taylor, Bo and Robin. All of them talked about choosing Gaziantep as a twin town, so said Taylor: *“Nijmegen was looking for a town twinning relationship with a city compatible to Nijmegen and would appeal to people with an Islamic*

background. After a long search, which I was not involved in, it became Gaziantep. (...) The town twinning relationship with Gaziantep, the choice for Gaziantep was made after a kind of race to see which city is compatible with Nijmegen. What is quite remarkable is that Gaziantep, I believe maybe one person, further there is no one in this region who has a connection with Gaziantep. (...) There were different cities, I believe there was a longlist of 20 Turkish cities, and it became a shortlist of 5/6 cities.” Bo mentioned the description of a city compatible with Nijmegen as well: *“I do not know how this project started. I believe that one of the mayors in the past thought that it would be a good idea to start twinning with a Turkish city. It was a big hassle which city it should be. The municipality tried to guide it in a correct way, with public consultation evenings and voting. Most Turkish people living here wanted a partnership with a city where they came from. But that did not work out, it had to be a city which was compatible with Nijmegen, for example having a university or a hospital. Things as size, location, a border town for example. The municipality thought there were a few requirements a possible partner city should meet. Not everybody agreed on that. I think it was a bit a false start.”* Robin stated the following about the choice for Gaziantep: *“The municipality looked into certain criteria, both cities have a university, an economic interest. I was not involved in the decision making process, but they will have thought it through.”* The answers of Taylor, Bo and Robin show that the municipality of Nijmegen wanted to twin town with a Turkish city because it would appeal to citizens with presumably an Islamic background. An important factor in the decision making was that a possible twin town should be compatible with Nijmegen, for example having institutes like an university and a hospital. After looking into these aspects the ‘border town’ Gaziantep was chosen. The answers suggested a kind of discomfort amongst the former committee members regarding the choice of Gaziantep which will be looked into after discussing the organizational structure of the town twinning relationship.

4.4.1 Organizational structure

Taylor talked about how the town twinning relationship was organizationally structured: *“It was a connection between the city of Nijmegen, the administration of the city of Nijmegen and the administration of the city of Gaziantep. Thereby resources had been made available by the city and these funds could be used to support initiatives that would come about in the context of this twinning relationship. To make sure that not only the mayor, who carried this in his portfolio, would decide on this an advisory committee was called to life. In the advisory committee all the applies for a subsidy were discussed and tested against a number of*

criteria. Based on that, an advice was written to the mayor. (...) The committee existed out of five people. (...) We had a procedure that people who admitted a proposal, or representatives of an organization who admitted a proposal, we always aimed on the Dutch side; Nijmegen. It was not the case that proposals from citizens of Gaziantep could be admitted. The representatives of the organizations got the opportunity to elucidate the proposal. So it was always the case we had several representatives or organizations at our table who elucidated their proposals and we decided how we should advise the mayor, positive or not. (...) The main role was to review project proposals and consider whether it qualified for subsidy, keeping in mind the rules surrounding the subsidy.’’ Bo and Robin mentioned the structure and the guidelines as well, Bo said: ‘‘I took part in the advisory committee and the advisory committee was only one part of the town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep. There was one part, an administrative part, the municipality. It were the mayor and the high officials in Nijmegen who had contact with the municipality there (Gaziantep). The other part was a yearly amount of money made available for initiatives of the citizens, citizens of Nijmegen, to start a project in collaboration with people in Gaziantep. So contact of citizens here with citizens over there. To allocate the money in a correct matter an advisory committee had been appointed. We came together two times a year, the project proposals could be submitted before a certain date, we came together to read the project proposals and invited those people to get more information. Thereafter we decided whether the project was in line with the guidelines that were in place. If so the money was disbursed to them and they could start the project.’’ And Robin stated: ‘‘It was an advisory committee, we gave advice to the mayor and the officials about all kinds of initiatives in the context of the town twinning relationship. (...) We had a chairman within the committee and administrative support. We were an extension so to say, supervised by the municipality. So there was a contact person designated to us. (...) An official of the department of international relations who had an X amount of hours available and looked at a number of issues with us.’’ Bo recalled the content of the guidelines, saying: ‘‘The guidelines, for example you could not discriminate and you had to be neutral. A couple of things. It had to be citizens from here and citizens from there who were involved. I do not remember all the guidelines specifically, but there were guidelines. The city council decided to which it had to comply. Generally, a couple of rules.’’ Robin further specified about the subsidy and told: ‘‘The amount of the subsidy was related to budget of the initiators. They could get a certain amount of subsidy on top of their own

budget, depending on how large their budget was.⁴ Taylor emphasized that the advisory committee existed for two terms: *“There were two terms, we (the advisory committee) had been appointed for a second term. But after that the municipality did not appoint a new committee.”* And both Robin as Taylor briefly pointed out the following about the organizational structure on Gaziantep’s side, respectively: *“Here it was organized in a different way than in Gaziantep.”* and *“In Gaziantep an official was in charge of the town twinning relationship who specifically was tasked with town twinning relations.”* Robin elucidated: *“Here initiatives of citizens are stimulated, but that’s not the case in Gaziantep. (...) Everything had to run through the administrative level in Gaziantep. So the municipality there had a more dominant role than the municipality here in Nijmegen. There the municipality decided what was possible or not. (...) We only had an advising role. If they did not want the subsidy, citizens here were free to arrange activities outside of the municipality or the committee, they did not need to ask permission. That was not the case for Turkey. (...) The authorities wanted to have full control.”* The answers show that the municipality of Nijmegen and the municipality of Gaziantep maintained formal relations in the context of town twinning. In Gaziantep all activities regarding the town twinning relationship happened through the administrative level. Whereas in Nijmegen the municipality of Nijmegen appointed an advisory committee consisting of five citizens. The advisory committee was appointed for two terms. The committee was established to advice the mayor whether a subsidy should be granted to an initiative in the context of town twinning. Citizens of Nijmegen could submit a proposal regarding a project or initiative contributing to social, cultural, economic and/or emancipatory factors in the town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep. The advisory committee came together to discuss the proposals and obtain more information of the initiators. If the initiatives submitted met certain criteria the advisory committee would then advice the mayor to grant a subsidy to the initiators. The subsidy was an addition to the budget initiators had, in this way stimulating projects regarding the town twinning relationship.

4.4.2 Difficulties getting citizens involved

As mentioned before Taylor, Bo and Robin hinted that citizens did not have a strong connection towards Gaziantep. Going in deeper into this topic the (lack of) liveliness among citizens regarding the partnership becomes more clear. Bo recalls: *“It was also a bit the idea*

⁴ Projects with a budget under €30.000,- received a maximum of €5000,- subsidy. And projects with a budget of or over €30.000,- received a maximum of €10.000,-. Retrieved from the ‘Grant application form’ which can be found in appendix D.

that we as the committee tried to get the people interested. But that did not work out always. There have been a couple of projects, but sometimes it was hard to, I do not think the partnership was so lively in Nijmegen actually.’ Robin made a link between the choice for Gaziantep and the Turkish community in Nijmegen: *‘I think few people in Nijmegen have their roots in Gaziantep. In my opinion it was quite remarkable the choice for Gaziantep. For example if it would have been Erzincan or Trabzon, a believe hundred families are from there. It is their city. I have the feeling Gaziantep was not carried by the community because not a lot of people coming from Gaziantep are living of lived in Nijmegen.’* Taylor has another explanation: *‘It was always a struggle to make it ‘a partnership of the people’. And to not keep it only on an administrative level. (...) For example if I make the comparison with another town twinning relationship Nijmegen has with Masaya in Nicaragua. (...) Masaya was, the people of Nijmegen felt a connection with Masaya, I do not know why, but people were committed. They helped with for example advice on the construction of sewerage, basic but important. Over the years big amounts of money have been collected. Pskov (another twin town of Nijmegen) the same story. Pskov is located in Russia. In the vicinity of the Baltic Sea. There was an atmosphere of ‘hostility thinking’ regarding the Soviet Union. At that time it was a dominant mindset and people thought the only way to break with that mindset is as we do not look at each other as possible enemies. (...) That was the reason for the local community here to develop relations with Pskov. Pskov became a town twinning relationship in a broad sense, in all kinds of areas. If you compare it with Gaziantep, well it is the town twinning relationship that has the shortest existence, a bit imposed. Well that sounds a bit exaggerated and it is exaggerated, but which comes from the administrative level and not from the citizens. That’s why support among citizens has always been a thing.’* These answers show that the town twinning relationship was not so called ‘in the hearts’ of the people in Nijmegen. A reason for this, for citizens in Nijmegen with a Turkish background, is according to Robin that not a lot of people have their roots in Gaziantep. Taylor issues a reason as well, namely that the relationship was established ‘top-down’ and not ‘bottom-up’. Comparing the partnership between Nijmegen and Gaziantep with other twin towns of Nijmegen; Masaya and Pskov, that were established because of citizen’s based involvement. Although Bo, Robin and Taylor point out the struggle regarding the town twinning relationship, they agree that contributing to cultural understanding occurring in the context of town twinning is desirable. So mentioned Taylor: *‘What I think of town twinning, I do not know if it worked well in this form, but I think positively about town twinning. In living together I think it is quite important that people get to know one another. Initiatives in the*

context of town twinning can attribute to this. I've always found it striking that Dutch people went to the Turkish south coast on holidays and came back with beautiful stories of how much they enjoyed it, but if they saw their Turkish neighbors in the street they would not talk to them. (...) What I think is the importance town twinning can attribute is learning to appreciate each other and how to live together. (...) I believe it was a good initiative of the municipality to start this partnership. (...) But it always has been kind of a struggle to make it a partnership of the people and not only of the administrative level." Robin thoughts on town twinning: "Sadly the town twinning was not in people's minds here. I thought it would be more vivid, but only within a certain circle people were interested. We always asked ourselves why. (...) The moment you show more interest in other people, understanding starts to take place. (...) The projects that took place contributed positively to more intercultural understanding, absolutely." Bo stated: "I am a little sceptic. It is good that people have contact with people of a different culture. And when people that did a project came back to Nijmegen, yeah, knowledge could be distributed. But why Gaziantep? I do not know the meaning of it, what do you want to achieve with a town twinning relationship? Well yeah, you do not want animosities between people and of course you want that there is a understanding for each other, we are all people. But I do not think it was so vivid in Nijmegen. No." Taylor, Robin and Bo all stress the importance of intercultural contact and understanding for one another, but they are not sure if the town twinning relationship in this form with Gaziantep is the way to achieve this.

4.4.3 Exchange

In the town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep there have been several exchanges. Robin points out a school exchange with Gaziantep: "Every initiative contained cultural interaction. It does not matter in which sector you do something, but you'll come in contact with a different culture. (...) There was a school exchange. (...) They slept in guest houses. For children, even for children with a Turkish background, it is so different to go with a project to a country where your parents come from than to go with your family. But they did a lot of educational exercises. I think it is important for the youth to experience, you can tell them a lot. But experiences stay with you for the rest of your life. You can read a lot of books about Turkey, but if you go to Turkey it is so different than only read a book and watch twenty movies. (...) Experiencing it yourself is very informative." Bo as well stresses the importance of exchanges for young people: "There was a school exchange, and in my opinion those are the most important. Young people that are doing this, going there. (...) It is an eye-opener.

(...) I think it is important to see and to feel that people live in different ways and do different things. And why they do that, because they are coming from a different situation. Therefore I think it is so important that young people went on the school exchange and were there with their fellow Turkish pupils at their homes. (...) It does not necessarily needs to be Gaziantep, but through the town twinning relationship there was an opening to go to Gaziantep.” Taylor shares the idea that it is valuable for people to see a different point of view: *“There have been several artists who were in contact with each other and there have been exchanges. For example there was a Turkish photographer, or collective I thought it was, here in Nijmegen to take photographs. But of special occasions, then you have to think of funerals, marriages, gay-marriage, well that is, it does not happen in Turkey (gay-marriage). At least not that it is formally confirmed.. (...) To celebrate it, is quite special. The point was to take the pictures back to Gaziantep, Turkey. To organize an exhibition, to show in a small scale something of the world. Because you have to imagine, people living in Gaziantep. A big city and a lot of Syrian refugees, it is quite an impact on the community. Well Gaziantep is on a whole quite religious. It is a city with a lot of flats. On top of each other, not a lot of space to meet outside. Except maybe for a teahouse or a park. So there is not a lot of visibility, different than TV or internet, it will be mostly TV, well you can imagine what’s on the TV’s there, a different world. A different world than we know. And therefore those picture, small as it can be, it is valuable to show people a different point of view.”* Robin recalls another exchange: *“‘Fashion with a mission’ went to Turkey once, it is handicraft. Emancipation of women, beautiful initiative. (...) Women from here, from the project, went to Turkey to come into contact with women there that made all sorts of things.”* Both Bo as Taylor remembered a project from a local artist: *“An artist here from Nijmegen submitted a project. He had a connection with a guy in Gaziantep. A nice project. He went to there and the other guy came here. (...) About a mosaic gypsy girl, very famous. He brought attention to the project and the town twinning relationship.”* Taylor said about this: *“There have been artists from Nijmegen who went to Gaziantep. One of them, I know Gaziantep has an icon. Near Gaziantep a village was discovered, when a dam was built in the Euphrates, that village near the Euphrates had beautiful mosaic floors. In Gaziantep there is also a museum showing those beautiful mosaic floors, really special, and there is a girl. A gypsy girl, not the whole face is visible, but you can see the striking eyes. It is the icon of Gaziantep. And an artist from Nijmegen painted it on a bridge here over the river ‘the Waal’. (...) A lot of people were wondering who it was. I posted it once on Facebook and I got a lot of reactions from my Turkish contacts. It is such a famous stature. It does something with the people. I think it is very important and I’ve*

discussed this with those artists, how you can give people a sense of pride. A lot of Dutch people do not have a clear view about Turkey. (...) It is important to transfer it, in this case through cultural exchange. There was also a play, not only of a Turkish organization. It was a project about 'Listrata', a Greek classical writer. A play in which women deny men of sex if they do not come to peace with the other party. It was a play rehearsed by a Turkish delegation, a Greek delegation, a German delegation and a Dutch delegation. And the actors performed it together. Everybody spoke their own language, so Turkish, Greek etcetera, it was amazing. (...) These examples are all small contributors, that can plant a seed. So people think about it.' Bo talked about a project that got canceled: 'I think our 'new' mayor did not even went to Gaziantep. Because it was around the time where there was conflict in Syria, and they were afraid, because Gaziantep is next to the Syrian border. So it got canceled. It affected us as well. NEC (Nijmegen's local football club) had a nice project. I talked several times with them, but they were afraid something would happen. Because they had all these young guys and maybe even some girls, who'd go on exchange. There would also be coming football players from Gaziantep to here. It was such a good initiative.' Next to these projects and these exchanges that occurred via the official route, there was also an initiative reaching Gaziantep that had a more low-profile. Both Robin and Bo talked about this project. Robin thinks fondly of this project: 'I thought the initiative of the COC (a gay rights organization), I still remember it till this day. They came in contact with some men of the university in Gaziantep. It was very secretive, and I believe the municipality of Nijmegen was a little worried. Even someone in our committee was against it, due to personal beliefs regarding homosexuality. I found that very interesting. I think it is very courageous that people here try to go to there and talk about such a taboo-theme. Have those conversations, help people from a distance and hear their stories. They did not ask for subsidy, more letting us know that they went there. We have read some information and had some conversations, it was all organized. I believe such initiatives are desperately needed in a city like Gaziantep.' Bo mentioned the COC project as well: 'Well in Gaziantep the municipality oversees all activities, you need their collaboration. But there was a low-profile project by the COC, homosexuals. It was low-profile, otherwise it would have been too dangerous for the homosexuals in Gaziantep. (...) I believe, in hindsight, maybe it would have been better if they went to a city where the LGBT community has more 'body', it would have been easier. (...) I remember I took some posters with me when I went to Istanbul and dropped them off, in Istanbul they had a sort of COC-thing as well, and via via it would end up in Gaziantep. (...) We tried to help wherever we could. (...) It is very important to have a network. (...) The COC was the, I think one of the

few examples not asking help from the officials. You did not necessarily need to, but it makes it more difficult. (...) Because you need those connections.’ Bo also mentioned an exchange aimed on transferring an initiative that worked well in Nijmegen to Gaziantep, although a big effort was made the initiative did not work out: *‘The ‘School is Cool’ here in Nijmegen, in the Netherlands it is quite popular. Children in primary school, I think in their last year of primary school. Teachers have a good insight which pupils will have difficulties with the transition to high school. Because they need to be stimulated and it is not happening at home. So there are mentors, volunteers who once a week check up with the pupils. And they talk about, when you are going to high school you have to do your homework and make a planning. So for about one year, they guide the pupils at the end of primary school and into the first year of high school. It is working quite well in the Netherlands. (...) In Turkey you have the same situation, maybe even bigger differences between primary school and high school. They tried with several people to start the initiative over there. But I do not believe it worked out. Because there are less organizations there working with volunteers. Here you have more people thinking ‘well I am 60, 65 or retired, or I want to help out a few hours a week to help a cause that is important to me.’ You do not have that there, it is so different over there. I believe over there it is much more a battle for survival. So the people they contacted, also a lot of official people of the municipality, tried to start the project, but it did not work out. They put so much effort into this, translated everything into Turkish. So much effort and dedication.’* Taylor, Bo and Robin all discussed an exchange about first line healthcare. So said Taylor: *‘What I remember of one project, is that a delegation of hospitals in Gaziantep came here to the Radboud hospital. They had consultations about how the first line health care was organized. In Turkey the case is, you’ve got good healthcare there, because often they are private clinics. Actually there is nothing in between specialists and basic healthcare, here we have general practitioners. There, I do not know if it eventually led to a system of general practitioners over there, but they were very interested in how we filled the void here in the Netherlands, through which expensive specialist health care could be limited. And not only to keep the costs in check, but also because a lot of people could not afford specialist health care and did not have access to that kind of health care. (...) The information they learned here they had taken home to Gaziantep. Maybe, I do not know, there is still contact with the people involved. I mean, it went ‘around’ us. It was more the ‘broker role’ we played, making connections. (...) You can learn a lot from each other, for sure.’* Bo said: *‘The med school for general practitioners here in Nijmegen had reached out to the university in Gaziantep. Because Gaziantep was just starting with general practitioners, they*

did not exist before. (...) The first line healthcare, not going immediately to the hospital for every small thing that is going on. They started with the medical faculty in Gaziantep. (...) A delegation came here.” According to Taylor Nijmegen also took over an idea from Gaziantep: “In Gaziantep there is a ‘mother and child home’. For several reasons there are a lot of kids who during the day do not have a place to be. Therefore they founded what they call ‘mother and child homes’, where children are being taken care of by women. In this way they do not have to wander the streets and only God knows what happens there. Well, that idea was to start this here as well. I think it got integrated within neighborhood centers where children from the neighborhood go for after-school ‘care’, for homework and those kind of things.” There have been several cultural exchanges, diverse projects including school exchanges and artistry, as well as projects where exchange of ideas was fostered, especially seen in the issue of first line health care. Although these exchanges happened through subsidy help in regard of the town twinning relationship, there was one exchange that had a more low-profile, the projects of the gay rights organization COC. There were also projects that were not successful, for example the NEC project that got canceled because of Gaziantep being next to the border of Syria and therefore initiators feared that it would be unsafe due to conflict in the region. Next to these exchanges of civilian initiators there also have been exchanges on the administrative level, on the administrative level some form of financial exchange occurred. So said Robin: “Financial exchange was more an initiative of the municipality. Mayors have had visited Gaziantep. But that was outside us, we did not have a role in that. That were the administrative levels with each other. So several mayors and officials went to Gaziantep and visited the Chamber of Commerce. For example trade missions, a municipality official went 2 or 3 times with a few entrepreneurs. They visited some bigger businesses and looked into possible collaborations, but as far as I know it did not lead concretely to something.” And Bo mentioned: “Next to the projects wherefore the committee was in place. You had the municipality itself, mayors having contact with each other. That was more official with a banquet for example.” Taylor addressed this topic as well: “A municipality official, Tankir, in charge of economic development. He was coming from Turkey and could be a facilitator. Some small exchanges have occurred. But I believe nothing too big.” Financial exchange did occur in the sense that an administrative official of Nijmegen went to Gaziantep to look for possible economic collaboration, but according to Robin and Taylor this did not lead to specific financial exchanges. The projects Taylor, Bo and Robin where in contact with were more cultural exchange based.

4.4.4 Ending town twinning relationship & Influence national level

In the interviews Taylor, Bo and Robin addressed the ending of the town twinning relationship as well. They notice that activity of the town twinning was less in the last years of its existing, due to different reasons. So said Taylor: *“The coup influenced the town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep. After the coup a visit of a delegation from Gaziantep was canceled. And after that it hadn’t become much better. (...) They knew that they had more control in Turkey than in Nijmegen. So if people would try to connect with Gülenists for example, well they would not like that. (...) And it was forbidden around that time for officials to leave the country, in that way keeping people in the country who might needed to be arrested in the future. So yeah, quite an influence.”* Bo mentions this reason too, but recalls another reason as well: *“I believe the coup in Turkey and the situation in Syria influenced the town twinning. To start with Syria, because Gaziantep is so close to the Syrian border, people were afraid to go on exchange. And the coup. (...) Officials could not leave the country. I remember there were people who’d come to walk here in the Marches, or it was not sure if they would come, very precarious, I do not remember exactly, but at least a lot was going. (...) But also here, I believe the municipality was already busy with the divestiture of town twinning relationships in general.”* The role of the committee was played out after the second term ended according to Taylor: *“Because the term of the advisory committee was over. No new members were appointed. I think the municipality of Nijmegen already had a certain direction in mind. Well than it sinks away. Nobody of us had any status in that regard. We could continue as a private organization, but we did not choose for that. I tried to interest some people, but it did not work.”* Robin told: *“At one point our role as committee was over. We were reappointed for a second term, but a third term never came. Just like in other cities it should be an bottom-up initiative. So our role was over. (...) When we were not reappointed for a third term we did not have a budget or support of the official of the administrative level. We thought about transforming it into a foundation, maybe together with the other twin town relationships of Nijmegen. (...) But it did not happen. It was a town twinning relationship only on paper at the end. (...) It already died down before the conflict. (...) But the final push was the clear message out of Turkey. ‘Over and out.’”* Although due to different reasons the town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep cooled down, less activities because of the coup in Turkey, fear from some initiators of the proximity of Syria, a non-continued advisory committee, the final blow is due to worsened bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands. According to Bo: *“I believe that Turkey is very much centralized. (...) It is not a free country in that regard. (...) I think as a municipality you have to be ‘in line’ with*

the government. (...) The town twinning ended because Gaziantep wanted Nijmegen to show solidarity. A bit forced in my opinion. Our mayor said something like: 'Well listen, we are open to continue, but we are not giving into your demands.' The mayor of Gaziantep is an AKP-mayor. (...) I think they made it into something much bigger than it was. It became something that actually had nothing to do with town twinning.' And Robin said: *'I think the town twinning relationship ended because of the mayor in Turkey. The mayor of Gaziantep has been a minister under AK-party rule and of the AK-party. So she is very close to Erdoğan. (...) She is part of the inner circle so to speak. I think the government expected a certain attitude in regard what happened in Rotterdam, well in my view, of Nijmegen. Just like when there is for example a bomb attack or civil unrest, and it is expected you sympathize and make a public statement. I think that they would have thought that Nijmegen, as a twin town, would condemn what happened and would make a statement. Well they did not get that, and that was a disappointment for Gaziantep I guess. Secondly they did not just want to send a signal to Nijmegen, but to the Netherlands as a whole: 'We are standing behind our people'. So standing behind the minister (Kaya) who went to the Netherlands and 'Showing in different ways this has consequences.' Symbol politics in a sense that 'This cannot happen in our country and it shouldn't happen over there.' What also weighed in was that the town twinning relationship was already of a lesser intensity after a while. So it would not be a big loss. But I was very surprised. (...) Because this has nothing to do with the town twinning of Nijmegen and Gaziantep. But that's the way it goes, politics, I think it was about nothing. And Gaziantep, well, I appreciated our Mayor. I admire the way he handled it. (...) I think he was very respectful. (...) Leaving the door open. It is just, you can have different opinions, but you have to keep the dialogue open.'* Taylor mentioned the following about a possible future of town twinning between Nijmegen and Gaziantep: *"(...) Our mayor did not want to throw everything away at once. (...) If there ever is a wish for future town twinning it costs more energy to start everything from scratch. (...) To revive a town twinning relationship it is of importance to have an entrance at the administrative level. It always helps. But to make a town twinning relationship come to life it needs to extend to the people, it needs to be something of the people."* The worsened diplomatic state of bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey led to a clear choice at the municipality of Gaziantep to terminate the town twinning relationship with Nijmegen. The AK-party mayor, close to Erdoğan, showing in this way the full support of the city of Gaziantep to the national government.

4.5 Analysis

The results show that the Dutch-Turkish town twinning relationships and partnerships on the one hand contain considerable overlap, but on the other hand, are quite different when it comes to their discourses. Looking into the organizational structure, two forms of transnational local relations can be established. Almelo-Denizli and Nijmegen-Gaziantep being official town twinning relationships and Amsterdam-Şişli and Haarlem-Emirdağ being relationships operating within a less formal structure, as partnerships. The local level relationships differ in how they are organizationally structured. In the transnational local relations of Almelo-Denizli, Haarlem- Emirdağ and Nijmegen-Gaziantep, citizens are actively involved. This is not the case for the partnership of Amsterdam-Şişli. In this partnership citizens are not involved. The administrative levels collaborate together on different issues. The other transnational local relations have, just like in the partnership of Amsterdam-Şişli, an administrative (municipal) level as well. When the town twinning relationship was still operative, the municipality of Almelo subsidized the Almelo-Denizli committee, which in turn, organized activities and exchanges. These were mostly cultural exchanges and exchanges of ideas. Officials of the administrative level of both the municipality of Almelo as the municipality of Denizli visited each other for cooperation evaluation purposes. However, on Almelo's side the committee focused on organizing the activities and exchanges. This is also the case for the partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ. Exchanges between municipal officials of the cities occurred, but in Haarlem the foundation is responsible for organizing activities and matching organizations for both cities. These initiatives have been funded by the municipality of Haarlem. The organizational structure of the former town twinning relationship between Nijmegen and Gaziantep deviates a bit. In Nijmegen the involved citizens were members of an advisory committee, where they were not in charge of organizing projects themselves, but advised the mayor whether or not to subsidize projects regarding the town twinning relationship.

In terms of 'exchange' Almelo-Denizli, Haarlem- Emirdağ and Nijmegen-Gaziantep were focused on cultural exchange and exchange of ideas, financial exchange was less prevalent and mostly unsuccessful. The exchange in the partnership of Amsterdam and Şişli mainly focuses on the exchange of ideas. Due to a lack of citizen involvement, cultural exchange does not occur. Within the partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli there is no specific focus point regarding financial exchange. Their reciprocity goal mainly focuses on knowledge exchange and gaining and learning in that way from each other.

Another division can be made when looking into the Turkish guest worker background. Almelo and Haarlem both have a partnership with a Turkish city from which most of their Turkish community members originate. In these cases that was the reason to enter local transnational relations for Almelo and Haarlem with respectively Denizli and Emirdağ. Although Amsterdam and Nijmegen have substantial Turkish communities living in their cities as well, their choice for entering a local level Turkish-Dutch partnership was based on other reasons. For Amsterdam the partnership came about because of good relations of the former mayor of Amsterdam and the former mayor of Istanbul. Facing the same issues, Şişli was believed to be a good match in tackling these issues. Nijmegen had a completely different process of finding their Turkish twin town. They searched for a city that had a university and was close to the border. Therefore Gaziantep, having a university and being close to Syria, was approached by the municipality of Nijmegen to start a town twinning relationship.

A remarkable observation is that, except from the partnership of Amsterdam and Şişli, the local transnational relations became less active in their last years. For the town twinning relationship between Almelo and Denizli this was due to budget cuts at the municipality of Almelo as well as the fast development of Denizli, that therefore became less compatible. The partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ became less active due to a reorganization in the municipality of Haarlem, difficulties regarding having enough volunteers and having less input these last years. For Nijmegen and Gaziantep the intensity of the town twinning relationship decreased due to fear of initiators regarding the conflicts in Syria near the border town of Gaziantep. Besides this, the coup, the advisory committee not being reinstated after its second term and the low commitment of the citizens living in Nijmegen, contributed to the decrease of intensity of the town twinning relationship.

Although these transnational local relations became less active, it seems that it is not the main reason why two of the town twinning relationships (Almelo-Denizli and Nijmegen-Gaziantep) were terminated. For the town twinning relationship between Almelo and Denizli the final blow ending the relationship was the strong influence of the national level. After a conflict with the Dutch government, the Turkish minister of Family Affairs travelled to the city council of Denizli and requested Denizli to take distance from its Dutch twin town. This led to an unanimous vote of the city council terminating the town twinning relationship. Nijmegen's twin town Gaziantep was also strongly influenced by Turkey's national government, having close ties with the national administration. AK-party was the ruling party at the time of terminating the town twinning relationship. Because of close ties with the high ranks of the AK-party and wanting to show solidarity with the AK-party, the mayor of

Gaziantep took the decision to end the town twinning relationship. Another reason for termination could be that these ended relationships were on a 'higher' level of local transnational relations and therefore being a harder statement with regard to the actions of the Netherlands during the 2017 conflict. The ending of this town twinning relationship could therefore be seen as a form of symbol politics. Although on the contrary could be argued that both these town twinning relationships became less active over time, whereby there was less to lose by terminating relationships that already were largely inactive. The partnership of Haarlem and Emirdağ had become less active as well. This partnership was less influenced by the national level. The reason for less influence of the national level on this partnership can be found in Emirdağ's broad diaspora. Emirdağ is a city where almost all of its citizens have relatives living outside of Turkey due to labor migration in the past. Therefore, through these 'outer Turkey' connections, citizens still residing in Emirdağ are not so easily influenced by political pressure of the Turkish government. The partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli still exists. The results show two main reasons for these partnerships still being operative. On the one hand the partnerships are successful in the goal of reciprocal knowledge exchange, which is why there is a strong will on both sides to continue the partnership. On the other hand, the mayor of Şişli is not a member of the AK-party. Therefore, he is less sensitive to central government wishes and stances of the ruling AK-party to abstain from relations with the Netherlands.

In the next chapter, the reasons for the worsened bilateral relations between the Netherlands and Turkey having led to the termination of some Dutch-Turkish local level town twinning partnerships, while others are still operative, will be further illustrated by placing them into the framework of the town twinning phases model.

5. Conclusion

In this study the main question of how a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey led to a termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships while other transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships have remained unaffected is researched. To find an answer to this question, I interviewed a total of nine people involved in four different (formerly) transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Theory surrounding these relationships stated that town twinning is a low politics tool to facilitate different forms of exchanges; cultural exchange, exchange of ideas and financial exchange (de Villiers et al., 2006). Therefore, creating a theoretical framework in which the partnerships were investigated. By looking into the three forms of exchange in combination with institutional structure and institutional involvement, the discourses of the transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships have been portrayed. In this way showing differences and similarities amongst the various partnerships. In addition, the influence of the national level on the partnerships was examined and will be discussed in this chapter providing an answer to the research question. Besides that, the limitations of this research, suggestions for further research and the recommendations for praxis will be addressed in this chapter.

5.1 Concluding the study

There are different reasons why the same worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey has led to the termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships while some have been remained unaffected. First of all, it is of importance to make a distinction between the terminated town twinning relationships, Almelo-Denizli and Nijmegen-Gaziantep, and the still operative partnerships, Amsterdam-Şişli and Haarlem-Emirdağ.

The two town twinning relationships had an official agreement regarding their collaboration. The municipalities were formally involved in back and forth activities promoting transnational exchange between the municipalities, cultural exchange as well as the exchange of ideas. Their official commitment to each other did not result in financial exchange. The lack of financial exchange in these town twinning relationships contradicts the theory as described by de Villiers et al. (2016), which states that town twinning relationships

develop into three stages. The town twinning relationships compassed characteristics of the first two phases (presented in table 2). The first phase, the ‘associative phase’, twinning based on friendship and cultural exchange and the second phase, the ‘reciprocative phase’, contact between people of different cultures through the exchange of ideas (Clarke, 2010). The town twinning relationships did not enter the third phase, the ‘commercial exchange phase’. In the experiences of local actors involved in these town twinning relationships it came forward that town twinning had become less active and stagnated. The town twinning relationships not having entered the ‘commercial exchange phase’ suggests that town twinning relationships don’t follow one linear path. The linear evolvement of town twinning relationships in three successive phases, as presented in the theory, is therefore not supported.

The still existing partnerships between Amsterdam-Şişli and Haarlem-Emirdağ are collaborations of a less official commitment form. The partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli is mainly aimed on knowledge reciprocity and therefore according to town twinning in phases theory is in the second phase of the model. The partnership between Haarlem and Emirdağ embodies characteristics of as well the associative phase as the reciprocative phase.

Table 2: Overview of transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships encompassing characteristics of the three town twinning phases model of de Villiers et al., (2006)

	Associative phase (Cultural exchange)	Reciprocative phase (Exchange of ideas)	Commercial exchange phase
Almelo-Denizli	X	X	
Amsterdam-Şişli		X	
Haarlem-Emirdağ	X	X	
Nijmegen-Gaziantep	X	X	

In the second chapter of this study the hypothesis was drafted that a town twinning relationship in a further phase is more 'established' than a former phase and therefore less influenced by the state of a relationship on a national level. Meaning that a town twinning relationship in the third phase would have more mutual interests due to a further development of exchanges, creating more strengthened relations between the involved municipalities than a town twinning relationship in the second or first phase, and therefore would be more resistant to diplomatic friction of the national level. This hypothesis cannot be confirmed, because the transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships all encompass characteristics of the second phase, while none can be classified as being in the third phase of 'commercial exchange'. Therefore, according to the town twinning in phases model, there is no difference in the development of exchanges between the transnational local partnerships and the partnerships are equal in their resistance to diplomatic friction on the national level.

It seems that being influenced by a worsened state of diplomatic relations on a national level is not based on the phase a local transnational relationship is in, but on the inclination of the municipal executives of the partnering municipalities to back national government stances in a worsened diplomatic relationship on the national level. As is seen in the partnership between Amsterdam and Şişli, where Şişli did not give in to the wishes of the central government to cut ties with the Netherlands. Moreover, the mayor of Şişli explicitly stressed his will to continue the partnership. In this way not letting the Turkish central government interfere in the Dutch-Turkish local partnership. Whereas the contrary happened in Gaziantep. The mayor of Gaziantep backed the Turkish national government stances and as a result canceled its collaboration with Nijmegen. Therefore, the inclination of municipal executives of partnering municipalities to back national government stances is a determining factor of whether or not local transnational relationships are terminated in a worsened state of diplomatic relations on the national level.

Theory surrounding town twinning in phases is aimed at exchanges (cultural, knowledge and financial exchanges) and does not encompass other factors like institutional structure, institutional involvement and ties with the national government. However, this study shows that these factors are actually key in town twinning relations. Including institutional structure in the theory would contribute to a better understanding of the discourses surrounding town twinning theory, because these structures determine the foundation of the practical implementation of town twinning cooperation. In addition, institutional involvement includes the people that operate and maintain town twinning relationships. Progress (or the lack of

thereof) of town twinning relationships is all dependent on the people that make the partnership. To include these aspects into the theory, more factors would be weighed in, contributing to a broader theoretical framework. Enclosing these factors would therefore give a better theoretical understanding of the conditions in which these phases occur. Besides that, I would stress the importance of the fact that no transnational local relationship is institutionally structured the same. That is why it is hard to categorize all different forms of town twinning in just these three phases. Therefore I would argue to extend the model so that institutional differences in local town twinning relationships can be distinguished. In this way there would be more room for the diversity of transnational local relationships, leading to a more accurate classification of a partnership in the phases model.

Another issue regarding the phases model is the important assumption that partnerships evolve in a linear way, meaning that partnerships will continuously enter a new phase. However, this study shows that town twinning relationships do not evolve linearly. Town twinning relationships can come to a standstill, or even face a downturn. Changes can occur in the commitment of involved actors and citizens, financial aid, need for knowledge exchange, the compatibility of cities and municipal policies regarding transnational collaboration. In the phases model backward mobility is not an option. Therefore, I argue that the model is too restricted in the discourse on town twinning relationships. A model not underlining linear evolvement, but including (downwards and upwards) mobility of partnerships in the phases would grasp a more accurate position of modern day town twinning relationships. By establishing the accurate position of a partnership, insights in obstacles and achievements become clear. Insights that can help to, on one hand, define and tackle difficulties within a partnership and, on the other hand, learn from the success within partnerships. In this way ensuring a successful continuation of the partnership.

5.2 Limitations & suggestions for further research

In this study I researched how a worsened state of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey led to a termination of some transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships while other transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships have remained unaffected. An important point of criticism in the way this has been researched in this study, is that there have not been interviews conducted with local actors involved on the Turkish side of the transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. It would have been interesting to also examine the view of involved actors on the Turkish side to gain an even more extended understanding of the situation regarding the selective termination of transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. Therefore, for future research, I suggest to include local actors of the Turkish side of transnational Dutch-Turkish relationships.

Another shortcoming of this research is a difference in respondents per town twinning relationship. To make an equal and adequate comparison of the different partnerships it would be beneficial to have a more balanced distribution of respondents, strengthening the reliability of the research. However, it can be quite difficult to achieve the participation of (formerly) involved local actors.

During the course of this research the differences between each transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationship became more clear. Although they all share the fact that they are partnerships aimed at friendly exchange, each relationship is quite different in its practical implementation of this aim. Not all partnerships include the involvement of citizens. Some relationships have a more formal commitment than others. And they all differ in which way activities come about and who organizes them. This makes it quite hard to make a general comparison and therefore detracts, to a certain extent, the validity. Although this research has tried to appoint the nuances and make the institutional distinctions of the transnational local Dutch-Turkish partnerships clear, in future research, the investigation of more relationships would attribute to even more precise insights in institutional differences and differences in the forms of exchange. In this way making an even stronger case of the reasons why in the same state of worsened diplomatic relations on the national level this has led to termination of some town twinning relationships while other partnerships have remained operative.

The last note to this research is that the interviews have been conducted in Dutch, while the text has been written in English. Although I tried to keep as close as possible to the essence of the Dutch sentences, I believe minor essences may be lost in translation.

Suggestions for further research are firstly to include actors involved on the Turkish side of the partnerships. In addition, future studies would benefit from researching more transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships and interviewing more respondents to gain even more precise insights in how the partnerships have been affected by tensed diplomatic relations on the national level. Besides that, during the course of the interviews the importance of cultural understanding came up quite a bit. It would be interesting to see to which extent cultural exchange in the local relationships attributes to cultural understanding and reduces intercultural prejudice. As a revival of the terminated town twinning relationships is possible due to normalization of diplomatic relations on the national level, it would be interesting to research how a 'break' in town twinning relationships influences restarted town twinning relationships.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings in this research recommendations are made with regards to transnational local Dutch-Turkish relationships. This research looks into transnational local relationships amidst diplomatic tensions on the national level. Based on the findings in this research, recommendations for praxis are presented.

In order to minimize a potential (negative) influence of the national level on local diplomatic relations, I would argue that before entering a partnership of any form, concrete agreements should be made about mutual expectations and goals. In addition, the parties involved should discuss the possibility of deteriorating diplomatic relations on the national level to establish how they would, in such a scenario agree, deal with (negative) influences of the national level. For example, including a clause in which an agreement is made to not let the national level interfere in the partnership. Stating that political quarrels on the national level are subordinate to the mutual benefits of local level collaboration.

To maintain a well-functioning partnership, communication is key. Therefore I would suggest introducing a workshop for involved actors in the transnational relationships which focusses on intercultural communication, in this way increasing understanding for each other. Learning in this workshop about the background of the other side. For example knowing how to greet in a different culture, learning the ways of non-verbal behavior, how feelings are expressed, delving into what is considered private and in what manner criticism is expressed. Additionally this workshop should also reflect on intercultural understanding and becoming aware of difference and cultural bias. This workshop could be given by, depending on the budget, by a communication bureau or by an involved actor of the counter partner.

On another note, I would recommend for both sides involved in the relationship to clearly explain to each which challenges they are facing and share information on how they are currently tackling issues in the social, educational and environmental domain, for example. In this way both sides would have a better overview of how and what they can learn from each other.

In regard to choosing a transnational local relationship, I would recommend to look into whether there is a societal need for such a relationship. If there is no societal need

for a partnership, it is hard to find local actors and citizens who want to commit themselves to the partnership. Without committed local actors it becomes difficult to organize exchanges, making a successful collaboration hard to achieve. Without committed local actors a partnership will eventually die out.

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7. Appendix

7.1 Appendix A: Interview guide local actors

Introductie	
Intro	Voorstellen Waardering voor deelname benoemen
Doel van het onderzoek	Kort uitleggen Deelname is belangrijk om hier een goed beeld over te kunnen vormen
Onderwerpen	Ik verricht onderzoek naar hoe bilaterale relaties tussen Turkije en Nederland in verband staan met het lokale niveau door te kijken naar de rol van Turks-Nederlandse stedenbanden . Er zullen vragen gesteld worden over de stedenband, de verschillende dimensies van de stedenband en vragen m.b.t. de bilaterale relaties tussen Turkije en Nederland.
Anonimiteit en vertrouwelijkheid	Mocht u graag anoniem willen blijven, dan wordt daar natuurlijk voor gezorgd. Ik zal dan niet uw persoonlijke gegevens gebruiken of noemen. Daarnaast wordt de informatie die u mij geeft alleen voor dit onderzoek gebruikt.
Vroegtijdig stoppen	Als u tijdens het interview besluit dat u niet meer verder wilt gaan, dan mag u dat ten alle tijden aangeven. Dan zal het interview worden stopgezet.
Duur interview	Het interview duurt ongeveer een uur. Of we stoppen eerder als we uitgesproken zijn of wanneer u eerder wilt stoppen.
Opname	Zoals u ziet heb ik opnameapparatuur meegenomen, waarmee dit gesprek wordt opgenomen. Ik wil u graag vragen of u toestemming wilt geven dat ik dit gesprek opneem. Daarom vraag ik u zo meteen, wanneer de apparatuur aan gaat, of u toestemming geeft dat dit gesprek wordt opgenomen.

Interview	
Intro	Uitleggen in welke volgorde de thematiek aan bod komt. Eerst zal ik u vragen naar uw relatie tot de stedenband. Vervolgens vraag ik u naar de verschillende dimensies van de stedenband. Ter afsluiting ben ik ook benieuwd naar uw kijk op bilaterale relaties tussen Turkije en Nederland.
Algemeen	<p>-Wat is uw functie (geweest) in de stedenband? (→ Indien de geïnterviewde de functie nog steeds vervult, vragen in de actieve vorm stellen.)</p> <p>-Voor welke taken was u verantwoordelijk?</p> <p>-Waar ging veel tijd naar uit in uw functie?</p>
(*Thema 1) Vragen over de stedenband	<p>-Hoe bent u betrokken geraakt bij de stedenband?</p> <p>-Wat vindt u in het algemeen van de stedenband? → Waarom vindt u dit?</p>
(*Thema 2) Bestuurlijke dimensie	<p>-Hoe vond u de samenwerking op het bestuurlijke niveau?</p> <p>-Heeft u veel contact gehad met Turkse collega's?</p> <p>-Op welke manier werd er gecommuniceerd met de Turkse collega's? → Doorvragen (Hoe ging dit dan? Wat vindt u daarvan?)</p> <p>-Hoe vaak vonden uitwisselingen op het bestuurlijke niveau plaats?</p> <p>-Op welke manier vonden er beleidsuitwisselingen plaats? → Heeft dit beleidsmatig tot iets geleid? (bijvoorbeeld het overnemen van 'best practices')</p>
(*Thema 3) Culturele dimensie	<p>-Op welke manier heeft er naar uw mening culturele interactie plaatsgevonden?</p> <p>-Hoe denkt u dat de stedenband invloed heeft gehad op uw burgers? → Wat heeft het opgeleverd buiten de stedenband? (bijvoorbeeld activiteiten, uitwisselingen)</p> <p>-Welke ervaringen heeft u gehoord van burgers</p>

	<p>omtrent de stedenband?</p> <p>-Hoe zou u de culturele uitwisseling beschrijven die plaatsvond?</p>
(*Thema 4) Economische dimensie	<p>-Hoe heeft de stedenband de economische relatie met Turkije beïnvloed?</p> <p>-Heeft u het gevoel dat de stedenband heeft bijgedragen aan (financiële) investeringen in uw stad?</p> <p>-Is er door de stedenband informatie uitgewisseld die heeft bijgedragen aan economische veranderingen? (bijvoorbeeld nieuwe creatieve inzichten of het overnemen 'best practices' op economisch vlak)</p>
(*Thema 5) Bilaterale relaties	<p>-Wat vindt u van de bilaterale relaties tussen Turkije en Nederland?</p> <p>-Hebben bilaterale relaties tussen Turkije en Nederland invloed gehad op de stedenband, zo ja in welke zin?</p> <p>-Heeft u het idee dat uw stedenband invloed heeft gehad op de bilaterale relaties?</p> <p>(-Hoe worden bilaterale relaties tussen Turkije en Nederland beïnvloed door de stedenband?)</p>
Hulpvragen	<p>U noemt, kunt u dit toelichten?/ Wat gebeurde er toen?</p> <p>Kunt u een voorbeeld geven van een situatie waarin dat speelde?</p> <p>U zei net Kunt u dit verduidelijken?/U zei net Wat bedoelt u daarmee?</p> <p>Wat zijn uw ervaringen daarbij?/Wat voor gevoel had u daarbij?</p> <p>Hoe denkt u daarover?/Wat vindt u daarvan?</p> <p>Heb ik het goed begrepen dat....?</p>
Afsluiting	
Afsluiting interview	<p>-Wilt u nog iets toevoegen aan dit gesprek?</p> <p>-Zijn er nog dingen die niet aan bod zijn gekomen in het gesprek, maar die u wel belangrijk vindt om te vertellen?</p> <p>-Wat vond u van het interview?</p>
Check	Het interview zal worden uitgewerkt. Als u wilt

	kunt u hier een uitdraai van ontvangen.
Bedanken voor het interview	Ik wil u graag bedanken voor uw tijd en uw deelname aan het interview. Ik hoop dat u het gevoel hebt dat u uw verhaal hebt kunnen vertellen en dat er naar uw verhaal is geluisterd. Wanneer u nog vragen heeft kunt u altijd contact met mij opnemen.

7.2 Appendix B: Securing anonymity of the respondents

Table 3: Overview fictional gender neutral names to secure the anonymity of the respondents

	Almelo	Amsterdam	Haarlem	Nijmegen
Respondent 1	Billie			
Respondent 2	Cameron			
Respondent 3	Quincy			
Respondent 4		Luca		
Respondent 5				Taylor
Respondent 6				Bo
Respondent 7				Robin
Respondent 8			Jaimie	
Respondent 9			Kris	

7.3 Appendix C: Coding overview

Table 4: Alphabetic overview of codes and the code groups

Codes	Belonging to code group
Attitudes regarding town twinning	Experience local actors
Choice Gaziantep	Organizational structure
Choice partnership	Organizational structure
Collaboration	Experience local actors
Communication	Organizational structure
Contact	Experience local actors
Cultural differences	Experience local actors
Cultural exchange	Cultural exchange
Cultural understanding	Experience local actors
Description partner city	
Difficulties to connect with citizens	Experience local actors
Discussion town twinning	
Ending town twinning	Influence national level
Exchange	
Exchange of ideas	Exchange of ideas
Experience local actors	Experience local actors
Financial aid	Financial exchange
Financial exchange	Financial exchange
Function	Organizational structure
Future prospects	
Future town twinning	Influence national level
Goal	
Importance network	Experience local actors
Importance of town twinning	Experience local actors
Influence national level	Influence national level

Influence of town twinning	
Involved actors	Organizational structure
Kocaeli	
Less activity	
Organizational structure	Organizational structure
Physical contact	
Political climate Turkey	Influence national level
Reason less activity	
Reason town twinning	
Reciprocity	
Role committee	Organizational structure
Role foundation	Organizational structure
School exchange	Cultural exchange
Subsidy	Organizational structure
Tasks	Organizational structure
Turkish guest workers	

7.4 Appendix D: Grant application form Nijmegen-Gaziantep

Subsidie aanvraagformulier Stedenband Nijmegen - Gaziantep

1. Naam project:

2. Subsidieaanvrager:

- Naam organisatie: n.v.t.
- Contactpersoon:
- Postadres:
- Postcode en plaats:
- Bezoekadres:
- Postcode en plaats:
- Telefoon / mobiel:
- (Post)bankrekeningnummer (incl. tenaamstelling en woonplaats):

Toelichting: Voor subsidie komen slechts rechtspersonen en natuurlijke personen gevestigd of woonachtig in de gemeente Nijmegen in aanmerking.

3. Projectdetails

a) Planning

	dag	maand	jaar
Start project			
Einde project			

b) Toelichting op het project: activiteiten en doelstelling:

4. Criteria voor bijdrage

a) Vindt het project plaats in Nijmegen, Gaziantep of in beide steden?

- Nijmegen Gaziantep beide steden

Toelichting: Doelstelling van het verstrekken van de subsidie is het betrekken van burgers en instellingen bij de stedenband met Gaziantep door het financieel ondersteunen van projectvoorstellen.

b) Welke deelnemers zijn betrokken bij het project?

Toelichting: Bij de identificatie van het probleem, de formulering van de doelstellingen, de uitvoering en financiering van het project moeten meerdere deelnemers (groepen en/of individuele deelnemers) betrokken zijn.

c) Levert het project een bijdrage aan economische, sociale, culturele en/of emancipatorische ontwikkeling?

antwoord:

We gaan ervan uit dat het project geen partijpolitieke doelen nastreeft.

5. Hoogte van de subsidie

a) Totale budget van het project:

- tot €30.000,--
 vanaf € 30.000,--

Toelichting: Projecten met een budget tot € 30.000,-- ontvangen maximaal € 5.000,-- subsidie; waarbij het totale projectbudget gelijk is aan of meer is dan de toegekende subsidie.
Projecten met een budget vanaf € 30.000,-- ontvangen maximaal € 10.000,-- subsidie.

b) Welk subsidiebedrag vraagt u voor uw project? Kunt u de projectbegroting toevoegen?

Motiveer uw antwoord:

6. Gegevens die we nodig hebben om de aanvraag te kunnen beoordelen:

Voor bedrijven:

- een kopie van de inschrijving bij de Kamer van Koophandel;
- een verklaring van goed gedrag van de ondernemer;
- een projectplan en kostenbegroting.

Voor instellingen / stichtingen:

- een kopie van de inschrijving bij de Kamer van Koophandel;
- het laatste jaarverslag, de statuten en kopieën van het paspoort van de bestuursleden;
- een projectplan en kostenbegroting.

Voor natuurlijke personen:

- een kopie van een geldig legitimatiebewijs
- bewijs van goed gedrag
- een projectplan en kostenbegroting

