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**The Reality of Paradiplomacy:  
The Development of Sister Cities Nijmegen-Albany**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on the longstanding relationship between Nijmegen and Albany. It analyzes the start and development of the relationship through six dimensions of the concept of city diplomacy: security, development, economy, culture, networks, and representation.

This thesis starts with an introduction to the concepts and dimensions. These will then be used in the next chapters, in combination with both primary sources of the Regionaal Archief Nijmegen, to analyze the Nijmegen-Albany sister city bond.

## **Keywords:**

Paradiplomacy, city diplomacy, sister cities, Nijmegen, Albany, international relations, transatlantic relations

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## INTRODUCTION

Almost every city in the world has some “sister-cities”. These kinds agreements between non-centralized governments have been around ages, examples of these are the Hanseatic League, and the city-states in Ancient Greece. However, despite all of these cities eventually becoming part of nation-states whose centralized government sought to be the only authority to take part in foreign relations, many cities remained active. The “sister-city” agreements as they are often referred to today, were made especially after World War II between cities in Western Europe. The city-twinning agreements would allow citizens of cities in different countries and cultures to communicate and stay in contact with each other. Having just been involved in the greatest war the world has seen, the main reason to establish these relationships, was to help ensure peace in Europe in the future. Later, around the 1980s when the Soviet Union came to an end, first Eastern Europe also started to take part in twinning agreements and later the rest of the world was included as well. These agreements serve a multitude of objectives , such as economic or cultural benefits, and the exchange of knowledge.

One example of a sister city bond, and the main focus of this thesis, is the case of Nijmegen and Albany. The Netherlands was hit hard during World War II and so was the area of Nijmegen. However, what is special about Nijmegen, is that it was bombed on accident by the Allied forces in 1944 who thought they were flying over German cities. Nearly all of the Nijmegen city center was destroyed during World War II as a consequence. In 1947, so two years after the war officially ended, Nijmegen was still experiencing heavy difficulties because of this destruction. The city of Albany in New York, which historically has Dutch roots, started the *Albany Aid Campaign for Nijmegen*. A ship full of goods to rebuild Nijmegen and help its citizens to continue their life was sent. In exchange for their help, Nijmegen sent back thousands of tulip bulbs, now Albany’s official flower. While the

partnership had been forgotten for a long time, recently the partnership has been given new life. The aid provided by Albany to Nijmegen is argued to be seen as a predecessor of the Marshall Plan created by the USA to aid Europe in rebuilding after the war by Stichting FAN, an organization which tries to keep ties between Nijmegen and Albany warm. Nijmegen and Albany are both still taking part in a twinning agreement, also known as sister cities, up to this day. While almost all cities have sister cities and many citizens are familiar with the term “sister cities”, there still has not been done much research about these agreements and how they came into existence and what their impact is in the current society. This thesis will seek to answer the question: *How did the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany start and develop in the period 1945-50 and in the present?*

To answer this question I will build on the concept of paradiplomacy and more specifically city diplomacy which will be explained later in the first chapter. While paradiplomacy has been an issue in academics since at least the 1980s, it has become a more “hot” topic in more recent years, starting in the early 2000s. Articles about paradiplomacy have been written from different perspectives. Some articles try to analyze the idea of paradiplomacy as a pure theoretical concept and lay a theoretical foundation to build from (Chatterji and Saha). Other articles try to do this in other ways for example by looking at the historical discourse (Lecours). Town twinning, a more specific form of paradiplomacy, is also studied through the lens of the most important actors, such as mayors (Acuto) and governors (McMillan). However, it should not be seen as something separate and a “new” layer within IR, but as something which could connect the local with the global (Cremer). In short the concept of paradiplomacy is about all activities a non-central government (NCG) performs in the international sphere, and thus also relates to foreign policy.

What however is missing in current research is an analysis of a longstanding relationship between two “sister cities”, this gap will be filled through this thesis where the

focus will be on a practical case which is still current and evolving today. Whereas other articles try to explain and define the concept I will use the definitions given by other scholars and apply them to analyze the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany at different historical stages of the relationship.

This thesis will consist of three chapters. In the first chapter the focus will be on the theoretical framework of the concepts of paradiplomacy and city diplomacy which I will use to analyze the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany. First I will explain the concept itself and where it came from, but also how it developed further and eventually was, and still is, being incorporated into International Relations theory. Building on paradiplomacy, this chapter will also explain the concept of city diplomacy, which could be divided into six dimensions. The second chapter will be an analysis of the Nijmegen-Albany case in the early years, starting in 1945 until 1950. Both the theoretical framework as well as primary sources from the Regionaal Archief Nijmegen will be used in this chapter. The third chapter will be following the same construction as the second, but with the current relationship between Nijmegen and Albany which has seen a resurgence in activity since 2015.

## CHAPTER 1: DEFINING PARA- & CITY DIPLOMACY

In this chapter I will first elaborate on the concept of paradiplomacy and explain what it precisely entails. Then I will focus more precisely on city diplomacy which is the form of paradiplomacy which can be seen in the case of Nijmegen and Albany. The chapter ends by naming and explaining the theory I will use to further analyze my case study in the second and third chapter.

### *1.1: Paradiplomacy*

To answer the research question I will use the concept of “paradiplomacy” which can be broken down into ‘para’ and ‘diplomacy’. Para comes from the Greek language and means “besides, adjacent to”. Diplomacy means “the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations”. The concept of paradiplomacy was invented by Panayotis Soldatos who defined it as “a direct continuation, and to varying degrees, from sub-state government, foreign activities” (Paquin 49). Combining both the literal meaning and the definition given by Soldatos, it means that non-centralized governments take part in foreign activities and can have their own foreign policies besides the ‘main’ foreign policy of the central government. The policies of non-central governments could be complementary to policies of the central government, but conflicting as well.

The traditional approaches to diplomacy in International Relations theory mostly focused on nation-states as the main actors participating in diplomacy. However since the end of the Cold War this has been challenged more often, due to the increasing globalization (Liu and Song 2), which allowed more actors to get involved. Thus theories started to account for more actors rather than just focusing on nation-states. This allows for a more complete picture of all possible influential parties. The main actors participating in paradiplomacy are not nation-states, but non-central governments. These types of governments are “both

sovereignty-bound and sovereignty-free” (Paquin 56). They are sovereignty-free, because regional governments participating in paradiplomacy can act on their own and take part in international relations, despite not having any recognition by international law or any sort of official sovereignty. However, they also are sovereignty-bound, unlike non-governmental organizations for example, NGOs can operate on their own terms and only push for their own agenda without being “constrained by the trappings of statehood” (Hocking 40). Non-central governments (NCG) cannot push their own agenda fully as they still fall under the central government.

Being in the middle of this spectrum provides both advantages, as well as disadvantages. Advantages being that NCGs can take a strong stance on delicate topics more easily than nation states who often need to remain diplomatic as extreme statements can affect relationships between the two nation-states in a more significant way than when a NCG makes the same statement. Disadvantages are that NCGs cannot sign official documents, since they are not officially recognized to do so in international law (Paquin 56). The concept of paradiplomacy changes the way scholars should study international relations. The focus was on nation-states, because historically speaking the central governments were the only ones allowed to participate in foreign policy. However, paradiplomacy says that non-central governments can also participate in foreign policy (Chatterji and Saha 376), thus the theories need to account for that as well.

Paradiplomacy has been around for a long time, but the more specific form of paradiplomacy, city twinning started to take off after World War II when French and German cities and their local governments started new relationships with each other in the form of city twinning agreements (Chatterji and Saha 376). These relationships were supported by leaders of the allied forces during WWII, as the main goal of twinning agreements at the time was to develop a better connection with the other culture for “promoting peaceful coexistence and

post-War reconstruction” (Chatterji and Saha 376; Mamadouh 343). Later in the twentieth century city twinning expanded out of Europe and became more common all around the globe. These new relationships also had different and more diverse motivation than before (Mamadouh 343). The increasing globalization after WWII also increased the role of NCGs. People of different nations are more easily connected to each other than before through for example the internet. The internet allowed people of all nations to be able to communicate with each other and share their perspectives on subjective matters whereas that previously was mostly in the hands of the central governments. Likewise, NCGs were also able to more easily contact other NCGs and work on shared problems for example. This causes states to “have lost their monopoly over social, economic and political activity in their territory” (Van der Pluijm 10). In other words this means that through globalization the central government has lost power over activities within its state.

According to Michael Keating there are three motivations for non-central governments to participate in paradiplomacy: economic, cultural, and political motivations. As any government or organization, NCGs need to continue bringing in new investors and other ways to increase income to grow their budget. By entering into paradiplomacy, they can find new investors for their region which in turn might lead to more employment as well as an influx of capital. Another economic gain might be to try and lure more tourists. Cultural motivations play a role for regions with their own culture or language. These types of motivation often occur when the state government looks unfavorable to that specific regional culture. Political reasons include NCGs looking for international recognition and help nation-building at home through “local leaders in international context” (Keating 4-5). This could have negative influences as well, since it could spark a wave of separatism or self-determination in the local region (Chatterji and Saha 381). This could be the case since the local region and its citizens

might interpret that as a form of them being able to govern themselves and not be as reliant on the central government as before.

Keating also mentions that the strategies used by NCGs vary in each particular case based on their motivations. Since each region has their own goals and motivations, their strategies are more specific and individually tailored as well, they are often “opportunistic and experimental” (Keating 11). Paradiplomacy also relies on the participation of the private sector, so local businesses, and civil society, so the “average” citizens. However, it does also differ in each case, as the goals might be different (Keating 11).

### *1.2: City Diplomacy*

A more specified form of paradiplomacy is city diplomacy, which as the term already suggests, focuses on cities. City diplomacy could be defined as “as the institutions and processes by which cities engage in relations with actors on an international political stage with the aim of representing themselves and their interests to one another.” (Van der Pluijm 11)

Within city diplomacy two types can be distinguished, multi-sided and two-sided city diplomacy. Multi-sided city diplomacy involves three or more parties, each representing a different city. Two-sided city diplomacy only involves two cities, however more parties can be involved, as there could be multiple parties to represent the same city. The focus of this thesis is on the latter form of city diplomacy between Nijmegen and Albany. Parties in city diplomacy could be citizens who participate through citizen movements. However, the most common representatives in city diplomacy are mayors, but other officials could also play a role (Van der Pluijm 11-12). The role of mayors in international relation and thus also in city diplomacy has changed over the last couple of decades and this has often been overlooked

according to Acuto (2013). He argues that “city leaders have long sought to expand their influence beyond the limited confines of their constituencies ... City leaders thus have progressively moved from ceremonial and advocacy roles to facilitating and policymaking functions.” (Acuto 485) The role of mayors in city diplomacy has become more active and important, however, their exact role has remained unnoticed in much research.

The goals of city diplomacy are similar to the goals of paradiplomacy as a whole, but often they are even more specific and tailored to the local. The main goals of city diplomacy are “creating benefits primarily for one party ... or creating benefits for both parties” (Van der Pluijm 12). An example of creating benefits for only one party could be assisting cities in developing countries, but the Nijmegen – Albany case could also be an example of this as Nijmegen was given goods to rebuild the city. An example for the second goal of benefits for both could be seen later in the Nijmegen – Albany case as both universities are connected to each other and exchange students on a regular basis and thus exchanging cultures as well.

There are a multitude of other reasons why a city might start participating in foreign politics next to these main goals. One being internal pressure from its own citizens who might want the local government to take a stance on international issues (Van der Pluijm 15). Despite all these reasons why a city might want to take part in city diplomacy, there are five limiting factors according to Van der Pluijm, which might also explain why city diplomacy is not as prevalent everywhere. Bureaucratic strength being one of them, larger cities have more funds and a larger number of staff available for city diplomacy. The character of the state system is the second, if cities are relatively autonomous they are often more active in city diplomacy. City diplomacy is also not “popular” in states where the central government already actively tailors to local needs. The location of the city itself is important as well, cities in the “core” of the state are more active in city diplomacy than those in the “peripheral” regions. The last reason which is mentioned by Van der Pluijm, are the “international

linkages” a city has. Cities that are dependent on a harbor for example are much more active in city diplomacy than those without one (15-17).

Cities participating in foreign relations can have both advantages, namely policies created by both the central government as well as the NCG can complement each other, as well as disadvantages, where both policies try to achieve opposite goals (Van der Pluijm 12). An example of an advantage could be that when the national policy is to try and lure more international organizations into the country and a city is lobbying to open a new office of an important multinational. Here both policies coincide and both goals are achieved. However, it could also be that one of the governments has the opposite goal in which both policies contradict each other. This means that more and more decisions need to be agreed upon with multiple regions before agreement with foreign states can be made (Ciesielska-Klikowska and Kamiński 59).

Other threats that come with city diplomacy build on this possibility of disagreements within a state. Foreign states can tailor to local interests of a specific city to create a favorable picture of themselves, which in turn might lead to favorable policies for that state because the city might try to block other policies which are negative for the foreign state (Ciesielska-Klikowska and Kamiński 60). NCGs might become representatives of foreign states, because they have been helped by the foreign state in the past.

City diplomacy and the foreign relations of cities can be divided into six dimensions according to Van der Pluijm: security, development, economy, culture, networks, and representation. I will shortly explain these dimensions and use these to analyze the city diplomacy between Nijmegen and Albany in the next chapters.

Cities have always played a role in security and conflicts. Cities and their governments are more often seen as neutral in conflicts than states as they do not possess or command armies

and they more often understand different perspectives in the same conflict as they are further away from the international community and international conflicts than nation-states (Van der Pluijm 20). Root problems of conflicts can be understood more easily through city governments as they know the local citizens best. Many city twinning agreements which came into existence after WWII were also built on this principle of “neutrality”, cities of both the allied and axis side connected with each other in order to prevent future conflict and to rebuild Europe. However, these city twinning projects of the past are not really how they are used during or after conflicts today. There are three types of diplomatic activities a city can undertake in conflicts today. The first being a preventative action to prevent an international conflict from happening, the diplomacy of conflict prevention (Van der Pluijm 21). Diplomatic activities during a conflict are a second type of city diplomacy being used in conflicts (Van der Pluijm 22). The final type of city diplomacy in conflicts are diplomatic activities after the conflict has ended. Cities often help each other in the reconstruction period after a conflict has occurred as was the case in Nijmegen. The major shift has been that cities are more involved in all phases of conflict than before.

Building upon the city diplomacy in the post-conflict period is the development dimension. The main driver for this development assistance is international solidarity (Van der Pluijm 23). It is argued that “top-down” development assistance is not the best and that development has to start in the NCGs and in the local to achieve greater results. This is because local governments know their citizens and their needs best, and thus can aim for more specific and fitting goals. There are two types of assistance a city can offer, humanitarian development assistance and emergency development assistance (Van der Pluijm 23). The first being more focused on the long term and the latter being focus on immediate needs. In this dimension it is of great importance that the national and local governments coordinate their efforts precisely so that they are working towards the same goals (Van der Pluijm 24).

As stated before, one of the most important goals and reasons to participate in city diplomacy is an economic gain for a city. Two ways can be identified to achieve that according to Van der Pluijm. One being to attract foreigners, for example tourists, foreign companies, or international events. The other being the export of their own goods, services, or knowledge through for example partnerships (25). Cities try to maintain the reputation they through campaigns and presenting themselves as a kind of “brand”. Partnerships that cities might enter are often based on something they have in common, such as previously mentioned cities with harbors might connect more often with each other than those who do not share anything (26).

Culture plays a large role in “regular” state diplomacy, but also in city diplomacy. Citizens can interact with each other through for example sports or cultural visits, but also by diplomats who organize an event in another city. Through these events values can be exchanged between the two different cultures (27). It is however argued that this dimension still is not fully used by cities as Western cities have few city-twinning agreements with cities in the Middle East and Asia. This could be because the cultures are too different and that there might be mostly misunderstanding if this were to happen (28).

The networks dimension focuses on “becoming organized on a regional, continental and global level” (Van der Pluijm 28). Many cities, especially in Western countries, have already developed a structure which can be used to communicate about local interests on a national level. In developing countries these kinds of structure do not occur as often. City-twinning agreements are a type of an international network. Many cities across the globe have these kinds of agreements, this includes the case of Nijmegen and Albany. These agreements are often used for cultural, recreational or educational ends (29). More recently, cities started including other cities who are not a part of city-twinning agreements and forming more of a “group” or network of cities who exchange ideas.

The dimension of representation focuses on diplomatic activities which are meant to officially represent the city in international organizations, such as the Committee of Regions of the European Union (30). Within these political organizations the main aim of these activities is to “participate in the decision-making process.” (Van der Pluijm 30) When cities are not included as an active party in a political organization, they still can be active on the outside through lobbying for example. This dimension is more important for larger cities now than it is for smaller cities, as they are not always as active or able to share their ideas and needs (31).

These six dimensions are what successful city diplomacy is built upon according to Van der Pluijm. I will use these dimensions because they encompass the theory of city diplomacy and make for a useful tool to analyze how the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany came into existence and how it developed over time.

## CHAPTER 2: THE FOUNDATION OF SISTER CITIES

The sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany has not been the subject of much research, however it is a special case. In order to analyze the city diplomacy between these two cities I will first present a short historical overview of the friendship between Nijmegen and Albany, most of this will be based on archival documents of the Regionaal Archief Nijmegen. Then I will analyze the early stages of the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany using the previously mentioned six dimensions.

During World War II Nijmegen had seen much of the war and the city had been battle scarred. Most destruction came from the bombing of the city center by the Americans on February 22<sup>nd</sup> 1944. The Allied forces were targeting German cities, but due to weather circumstances did they not bomb the designated areas but instead hit Nijmegen (van Run). In the same year Nijmegen also was a part of the Operation Market Garden, which involved the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division under General James Gavin. This operation caused what was left of the city center to sustain even more damage. A year later Gavin returned to Nijmegen and saw that the situation had not been improved after the war and that the city was not able to restore itself. On the other hand, Gavin also saw that the Nijmegen citizens were still “lovingly tending the graves of their saviors, the Allied soldiers killed the year before.” (Friends of Albany History) Gavin then took matters in his own hands and wrote to the Mayor of Albany, Erastus Corning, to help Nijmegen. It was not long after reported in American newspapers that Albany might want to adopt Nijmegen.

On December 4<sup>th</sup> Mayor Charles Hustinx of Nijmegen sent the first letter regarding the situation in Nijmegen to Mayor Corning. To briefly summarize the situation in Nijmegen after the war had ended, 2,200 were killed, 5,500 disabled for life, 60 streets fully destroyed and

more than 13,000 houses heavily damaged. Hustinx also said that there was a lack of “nearly everything, except food.” (Hustinx 1945)

“Please rest assured that all of us have a tremendous interest in watching the valiant efforts of your city to again get to the position that it had before the war” (Corning 1946) was the response of Mayor Corning, on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1946. Albany would then set up a committee responsible for organizing activities to inform the citizens of Albany about the desperate situation and to gather resources to aid Nijmegen. This committee had seven main goals for their aid (Glenn). The committee would try to assist Nijmegen by sending food for the undernourished and sick, as well as clothing and kitchenware for those in need. The committee not only focused on immediate needs, but also on rebuilding the city center of Nijmegen. They wanted to aid in the reconstruction of city hospitals, Saint Stevens Church, the Catholic University, and the Town Hall. To improve communication and coordination, the General Help Committee was formed in Nijmegen which would provide more precise information on the needed resources.

The Albany-Nijmegen Committee visited Nijmegen in March of 1947. During this visit, the committee would be able to observe what help was needed, but also allowed for easy and immediate communication between the committees. This visit also marks the start of the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany as Mayor Hustinx uses this phrase for the first time in his opening speech (Hustinx 1947). To accomplish the goals set for aid to Nijmegen, the committee organized a special drive, where relief supplies were picked up from people’s homes. All families in Albany were expected to gather items to put into parcels to send to Nijmegen. John D. Hatch, chairman of the committee, even said that “if no parcel is found on the doorstep we will ring the doorbell and ask for it” (New York Times). These parcels were sent to Nijmegen by ship where they were used to restore the lives of citizens of Nijmegen.

Queen Wilhelmina and Mayor Hustinx wanted to thank the committee and the city of Albany for their help and to further establish the bond between the cities 2000 tulip bulbs were sent to Albany. These were the “Orange Wonder” tulips which have been the official flower of Albany since 1948, which will always represent the special relationship between Albany and Nijmegen.

The dimension of security was clearly one of the main drivers in the foundation of the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany. Nijmegen had been destroyed during the war, and needed help in the post-war reconstruction period which it had just entered. Albany and Nijmegen entered into the sister city bond after the war had ended, which as previously mentioned was typical for the role of cities in international relations right after World War II. The local-to-local bond also made coordination much more precise as each city had its own committee with its own role. The Nijmegen committee could identify and communicate the most immediate needs, which allowed the committee in Albany to collect and send those needs as fast as possible. In hindsight it might also be possible that more city twinning agreements could have helped in the further distribution of other aid as well, as the local-to-local communication allows for much more precise communication. In the Nijmegen case this could be seen in the first letter by Hustinx to Albany in which he precisely lists all damages done to the city of Nijmegen.

The aid Albany gave to Nijmegen falls within the emergency development assistance, the immediate help given to areas in need. For Nijmegen these needs were clothing, medicine, but also pots and pans. While the reconstruction of buildings usually do not fully fit the “emergency” label, this was the case in Nijmegen as almost all of the city center was destroyed by the war and many houses and schools were thus destroyed as well. The items given by Albany allowed the people of Nijmegen to be able to go on with their lives and

maybe moving on from the horror they endured during the war. Nijmegen and the Netherlands were able to overcome the war and develop into a modern city and country.

While the start of the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany was mainly based on the reconstruction of Nijmegen after World War II, the relationship also quickly evolved into one with a deeper cultural meaning. Albany already had a long history with the Dutch culture as the first settlers were Dutch, but the sister city bond with Nijmegen made it something more tangible especially for the common people as the parcels often included letters to the people in Nijmegen who then could write something back. Another example of the expression of the sister city bond is the Tulip Fest in Albany. Nijmegen sent tulip bulbs as a thank you for the received aid, which sparked a “Tulip Mania” (Friends of Albany History) and the Orange Wonder tulip is still Albany’s official flower today. The tulip is now also a symbol for the friendship between Albany and Nijmegen.

After most aid had arrived and Nijmegen was well under way in reconstructing the city center, the new relationship also allowed for the establishment of new economic relationships. H.J. Kennedy, a former soldier in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne division, now wrote to mayor Hustinx if he could help connect him to local paper concerns. Kennedy wrote that he was still looking to establish himself in his company and that he could also represent Dutch paper concerns in the USA (Kennedy). City twinning allows businesses to connect with each other and could provide opportunities for all. This example also shows that the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany was not based on giving-receiving, and that the bond would be used for other purposes as well. Kennedy’s initiative is meant to help himself, but also his own concern as well as give Dutch paper concerns the opportunity to expand into the US market.

Both the networks as well as the representation dimensions of the theory are hard to identify in the early stages of the sister city relationship between Nijmegen and Albany, however I will still shortly address them here. The start of the city twinning agreement of Nijmegen and Albany meant that they both expanded their network in the international sphere. As the theory also states, these relationships were at the start mostly meant to cooperate on cultural and economic dimensions as was clearly the case in the Nijmegen-Albany relationship. The visits of both committees to the other city was a form of city representation. These visits helped in the establishment of the relationship, but it also made sure that both communities kept in touch with the other through these representatives. Besides communication, these visits might also have contributed in encouraging the people of Albany to really put in effort as it might have felt more personal as they really saw the destruction with their own eyes and met the people who had to live in Nijmegen.

The bond between Nijmegen and Albany immediately could be seen in all six dimensions of the theory. While some, such as security and development, were more important than others, it could be said that the start of the special bond which still exists today was successful. However, the dimensions cannot cover all aspects as a whole. The dimensions fall short to assign the role of General Gavin as a third party for example, he was the one who connected both cities to each other. In other words, while the dimensions do cover much of the essentials, they still might not suffice and there might be more dimensions needed to do so.

### CHAPTER 3: REVIVAL OF THE SISTER CITY BOND

In this chapter I will analyze how the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany evolved following its initial successful period. Like the previous chapter I will first give the historical context after which I will use the same six dimensions to analyze the development of the sister city bond.

The contact between Nijmegen and Albany faded in the 1950s and the 1960s based on archival research in the Regionaal Archief Nijmegen. While there might have been some contact on a personal level or maybe also even in an official level, there are no records of this contact between the two cities. The first revival of the sister city bond came in 1975 when Helene Smith of the Albany International Center was planning on visiting the Netherlands and Nijmegen especially before attempting to organize an exchange of Albany's and Nijmegen's citizens. "We should make a real effort to renew, vigorously, our sister cities relationship" (Corning 1975) is what the Mayor of Albany wrote to his colleague in Nijmegen. The new Mayor of Nijmegen, Theo de Graaf, said that he was "very much interested ... to continue the wonderful relationship between our two cities" (De Graaf).

Helene Smith was the lead figure in organizing the trip to Nijmegen which was set to take place in April 1976 and she was eventually joined by 200 of Albany's citizens who went on the trip which went through out the Netherlands to learn about the Dutch culture and Nijmegen especially. An important aspect of the trip was that not only did they learn about the Dutch culture in the Netherlands, but they already prepared themselves beforehand by following classes taught by Dutch families in the United States. These classes dealt with the Dutch culture and history, but also contained parts about the Dutch language (De Gelderlander). Part of the exchange was that *Nijmegenaren* would also visit Albany during the fourth of July in the following year, but there are no records of this actually happening.

However, there are opportunities for citizens, mostly students, of Nijmegen to visit Albany in the present-day, but this will be discussed later.

Later in the 1970s there was another attempt to continue the relationship. This came in the form of an offer by the Bale International Film Company to direct a documentary about Nijmegen and Albany and their special relationship. This offer was quickly rejected by the Mayor of Nijmegen who said “that the ties with our sister city of Albany at this moment are not so evident” (Gemeente Nijmegen). In 1984 the Mayor of Nijmegen, P. J. Hermsen, was invited to the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city of Albany, however, while the Mayor responded enthusiastically it is unclear whether this visit went through (Whalen III). This was also the moment where the relationship faded again.

Stichting FAN, Friendship Albany Nijmegen, has been resurrecting the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany since 2016. The foundation was set up to remember and celebrate the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany. The foundation attempts to give the forgotten bond a renewed attention and make it known to a wider public than it has been in the last 50 years. The first major event organized by Stichting FAN was the celebration of 70 years of friendship between Nijmegen and Albany (Grondahl) and since then more and more activities have been organized. I will only highlight a few of the many activities here in this thesis.

Stichting FAN connected students of schools in Nijmegen with their peers on the other side of the Atlantic in Albany. This led to a new version of pen pals, as was the case in 1947 when the first parcels arrived including notes from the people of Albany. This project also led to an exchange of Dutch students travelling to Albany and teaching the students about the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany, but also about the values of freedom and humanity (Stichting FAN). The high school exchanges however were not long-lived due to the

COVID-19 pandemic. Related to this is the agreement between the University of Albany and the Radboud University to exchange students with each other each semester. Students get the opportunity to study abroad and widen their perspectives this way.

There were not only efforts to revive the relationship in Nijmegen, but in Albany as well. The sister city bond of Nijmegen and Albany received extra attention during the 2017 Tulip Festival. A film with new interviews with people who experienced the aid first hand was shown and Anja Adriaans, the founder of FAN, gave a lecture about the history of the bond between the two cities (Grondahl). The tulip is not only a materialistic expression of the sister city bond in Albany, but in Nijmegen as well. Tulips have been placed on the quay of the Waal in Nijmegen near the location where the first ship was unloaded in 1947 and there is a plaque with information as well (Willems). This was organized by Stichting FAN, as the tulip symbolizes the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany.

Stichting FAN is not the only organization active in maintaining and reinforcing the ties to Albany. Another example is the Sunset March, this is a march which commemorates the Waal crossing and especially the 48 fallen soldiers during this operation (Sunset March). This is relevant in the relationship of Nijmegen and Albany as General James Gavin of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division which was involved in the crossing also was responsible for the initial contact and intentions of Albany to adopt Nijmegen right after World War II.

As noted before, these current relations are not one-sided. Most recently, in May 2023, the Mayor of Nijmegen, Hubert Bruls, was invited to Albany to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tulip Festival in Albany. Intentions to continue and strengthen the sister city bond were once again reaffirmed and new initiatives are taken to do so to this day (Nieuws uit Nijmegen).

The main pillar in the current state of the sister city bond of Nijmegen and Albany is the cultural exchange which happens continuously. Stichting FAN and the Sunset March try to uphold the memory of past historical events by commemorating them and celebrating the history between Nijmegen and Albany. The exchanges organized by both FAN as well as the universities try to make people aware of the differences between the cultures, but also their shared past. The focus on their shared past creates a sort of imagined community which might help increasing the likelihood of a successful continuation of the sister city bond. Another part of Stichting FAN's activities build on the creation of new traditions, such as the pen-pals project. All in all the main focus of cooperation between Nijmegen and Albany currently is on cultural exchange.

On the other hand was the dimension of security, as might be expected, not as relevant in the later stages of the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany as it had been in the early days of their relationship. This was to be expected since there has not been a major conflict in any of the two cities, and thus none had to act within this dimension. However, a connection could still be made with the Sunset March as well as the monument on the quay of the Waal. These monuments, while created fairly recently, still connect the current sister city bond to their past in which they were first connected through the consequences of a conflict. Like the dimension of security, development was not prevalent in the bond between Nijmegen and Albany anymore either. The Netherlands and Nijmegen were able to complete the reconstruction of their country fairly quickly and thus Albany did not need to continue their aid campaigns.

The economic dimension is visible in the 1970s with the proposal of the Bale International Film Company, as the filmmakers saw the opportunity to exploit the special sister city bond Nijmegen and Albany have. However, this case also showed that the bond was not always relevant to the Mayor and government of Nijmegen. In the present day there are

not any signs of this dimension becoming relevant, however that might still change in the future.

When following the theory, which says that the dimension of networks mostly focuses on non-central governments “becoming organized on a regional, continental and global level” (Van der Pluijm 28), the role of this dimension has not changed since the start of the relationship despite the relationship fading and resurrecting from time to time. However, it might also be interesting to see what parties got involved in the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany as that has not remained as strict as the theory says. Following the initial contacts, quickly more and more actors got involved in the relationship and especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was this visible. Non-governmental organizations took more initiative to improve the relationship again, while also involving the governments again. This case shows that the theory of city diplomacy might also need to study the involvement of third party actors.

Like the networks dimension, the dimension of representation in the exact definition given by the theory makes it hard to apply in this case. The definition might be broadened from representation in international organizations to just representation of a city in the international sphere. If this new simplified is applied it is much more interesting to apply to the case Nijmegen and Albany. Modern times allowed for easier contact between the two governments, while the main channels remained letters for a long time, there has been a shift recently. The Mayors of the cities now are able to more easily visit the other for official ceremonies or celebrations, as can be seen in the visit of Bruls in May of 2023. Maybe this in combination with activities of Stichting FAN who frequently visit Albany could lead to a consistent cooperation between Nijmegen and Albany again, as there was in the post-WWII period.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis focused on the concept of city diplomacy to analyze the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany with a special focus on the starting days and the resurgence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. City diplomacy, according to Van der Pluijm, consists of six dimensions: security, development, culture, economy, networks, and representation. These dimensions were used to analyze the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany in a systematic way.

The sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany came into existence following World War II. General James Gavin wrote to Mayor Corning of Albany that Nijmegen needed aid to get back to its former glory. Albany started a major aid campaign and helped Nijmegen in the post-war reconstruction. The initial relationship was mostly based on the cooperation between the two cities and the aid sent from Albany to Nijmegen. Later, the relationship got deeper through the exchange of letters which allowed citizens of both cities to communicate with each other. The tulip represents the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany to this day. The relationship also quickly allowed for more opportunities by third parties, businessmen from Albany took their chance as they saw a new market open up. One example being H.J. Kennedy, who sought help to establish himself within his paper company.

The relationship faded after the reconstruction of Nijmegen was completed, but there was a short-lived revival in the 1970s when citizens of Albany came on an organized trip to the Netherlands and Nijmegen to learn about the Dutch culture and the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany. Once again there was also a role for a non-governmental actor, namely the Bale International Film Company who sought to produce a documentary about Nijmegen and Albany and their shared past. This proposal, however, was not supported by Nijmegen as their ties with Albany were not “evident enough”.

Recently Stichting FAN has been working on strengthening the ties with Albany again. They celebrate the past and commemorate important historical events in the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany. One example is the monument at the Waal which features a short explanation and tulips, to express the relationship of Nijmegen and Albany. They also try to create new memories and traditions, such as their pen-pals project which connects high school students from both cities with each other to exchange letters, but also to learn about each other's culture. The Nijmegen and Albany governments are involved in many of the activities of FAN, however, they do generally not take an initiative role in the current relationship. The exception being that on official and special celebrations of the bond, such as the 75<sup>th</sup> Tulip Festival, delegations will visit and engage with each other. All in all, the sister city bond between Nijmegen and Albany has been an official agreement since 1948, but in reality, there have been only a few moments of close cooperation between the two cities. The future of this bond is looking bright, as third parties such as Stichting FAN are now activating the ties again.

It is interesting to see that now Stichting FAN is the leading actor when it comes to the city diplomacy between Nijmegen and Albany, as it is a third party, traditionally not included in city diplomacy. FAN was not the only third party involved in this sister city bond, as there had been a couple earlier instances where a third party was taking part in the city diplomacy between Nijmegen and Albany. This case shows that the theory of city diplomacy might still not be complete and might mean that future research should also account for third parties taking part and, like this case shows, taking initiative in maintaining and reinforcing ties between two cities. One could even say that the relationship between Nijmegen and Albany came about by a third party, namely General James Gavin who connected the two cities before they ever had contact.

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