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**What Characterises European Town Twinning in Denmark and the
Netherlands?:**

Four Town Twinning Cases Examined

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Abstract

Town twinning is a European phenomenon that occurs at the local level. Municipalities across Europe are collaborating across borders, involving politicians, officials, professionals, organisations, and citizens. This study investigates town twinning in specific cases of the Netherlands and Denmark by means of interviews with twinning officers in two cases from each country. The aims of the study are threefold: firstly, we wish to establish what characterises town twinning in these specific cases; and secondly, we wish to ascribe possible differences to the respective governance structures; thirdly, we aim to demonstrate to what extent European identity is of relevance to town twinning. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews we have observed that there are seven features that are of influence to town twinning practise: (1) there are various actors involved in twinning, varying between countries; (2) adequate evaluation of activities is lacking; (3) the municipal budget can be considered a key instrument; (4) European citizenship is of no value to the four cases; (5) key activities (official and citizen meetings) are based on tradition; (6) activities are facilitated by close proximity of the other twin town; (7) bottom-up and top-down forces are co-dependent. We have also discovered that the difference between Danish cases and Dutch cases with regard to the primary actor within the municipalities can be related to the way governance is structured at the local level in Denmark and the Netherlands. Furthermore, the local authorities' dependency on national government has been discovered in the Dutch cases, even though regional forces steer municipal decisions in different ways. We may point into the direction of validity: as most town twinning activities are purely habitual and the added value is not assessed, there are serious validity issues with regard to the implementation of town twinning. Furthermore, the municipalities steer the continuation of town twinning while stating that bottom-up forces are ensuring its existence. It is recommended municipalities adopt measures for evaluation. The claimed irrelevance of European identity in town twinning has serious implications for the EU with regard to citizens' support. We suggest improved accommodation in financial resources.

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1. Introduction

Europe can be said to be a very friendly place: thousands of towns have abroad friendships with (multiple) other places in Europe. This phenomenon, which entails the formally connecting of towns or municipalities, is referred to as town twinning. In 2010, nearly 40,000 twinings were registered; countries with the highest numbers were France and Germany, 6776 and 6048 respectively.¹ Town twinning originated in Europe and was boosted by two occasions: the Second World War and the Cold War. Both historical events were motivators for a more connected Europe. After WWII, cities wished to aid each other in reconstruction and the partnerships served as an instrument for peace. The Cold War similarly stimulated towns to reinforce their ties with other European towns, firstly as a way of creating a Western front, and secondly, after 1989, to aid former Soviet countries in their regained independence by incorporating these countries into the European network.² The European Union, consequently, has exploited town twinning, as unification and creating a peaceful Europe was essential to EU founders. European unification has been one of the EU's focal points throughout its history. While it started as purely economical and political unification, it has progressed into cultural unification as well. As it is mentioned in Shore's *Building Europe*, several means, such as the single market, European statistics, but also town twinning, contributed to the way people perceived the EU.³ In fact, the Annual Activity Report of 2011 for the DG of Communication has listed town twinning partnerships as a measuring point for European Identity.⁴

According to Falkenhain et al., after the year 2000, a decline in new twinning partnerships could be noticed.⁵ Moreover, a Dutch news article from July 2013 claims town twinning

¹ Council of European Municipalities and Regions. "Table Showing the Number of Twinings in Wider Europe in 2010." 2010.

² Weyreter, M. "Germany and the Town Twinning Movement." *Contemporary Review* 281 no. 1644 (January 2003): 37-43.

³ Shore, C. *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. London: Routledge, 2000.

⁴ European Commission. "Annual Activity Report 2011." edited by DG Communication, 1-34, 2012.

⁵ Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 229-50.

relationships have been subject of debate as a result of the current economic crisis.⁶ At the same time, there are institutions fostering the establishment of new partnerships, such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), through an online meeting space for municipalities and the offering of town twinning contracts; and the European Union by means of the funding scheme Europe for Citizens Programme, to enhance the number of town twinning projects. It can be concluded that a discrepancy exists between various sources, which begs the question: what exactly takes place in these networks of towns? The fact that this question needs to be asked proves town twinning is a valuable source for research. Moreover, the fact that it is of importance to the European Union is merely an aspect of the many subjects that town twinning touches upon. It is a relevant field of study, because it is an established part of many municipalities in European countries, and therefore touches upon topics of, among others: history, politics, culture, organisation of the nation state, internationalisation, European identity, and levels of governance. Only little research has been conducted into the topic of town twinning, and especially into the details of their activities. The scope of literature on town twinning most frequently describes the history and development of the phenomenon, from the perspective of one (or two) particular country. Furthermore, town twinning has also been researched as a means to describe Europeanisation processes. This thesis wishes to discover the influence of governance structures on town twinning practise, as this has hardly, if at all, been investigated. It was chosen to investigate cases in the Netherlands and Denmark, as they, upon first glance, appear to be similar with regard to governance structures: both are unitary states, constitutional monarchies, with three layers of governance, and respectively similar with regard to size. Even though Denmark has not been a part of the European Union as long as the Netherlands, the town twinning movement commenced for both of them in similar moments, as it started out as a European phenomenon (geographically). However, the EU has recognised its significance by supporting town twinning through funds and adopting town twinning as a measure for European identity.⁷ The term town twinning exists in both languages, each having a slightly different meaning. In Dutch, *stedenbanden* are the bonds that exist between cities; a very neutral way of describing the

⁶ Rijken, K. „Stedenbanden de dupe van crisis” *Binnenlands Bestuur* (16 August 2013).

⁷ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 131-137.

partnerships. In Danish on the other hand, *venskabsbyer* indicate a more friendly connection, as the direct translation is friendship cities.

This study's perspective is that town twinning is an example of decentralised power. Thus, if Danish and Dutch local authorities are similar in structure and power division, their behaviour towards town twinning should be as well. However, it is essential to become familiar with just how comparable both governance structures are. The discussion of top-down versus bottom-up belongs in this as well: for and by whom is town twinning? It is interesting to discover the details of the town twinning practise in Denmark and the Netherlands, and see how it is managed at governance level and how the activities are shaped, received and evaluated. The details of the activities will allow us to compare between countries, and within countries between towns. Moreover, we may also relate our findings to the European Union's aims with regard to European identity.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the town twinning practise in the Netherlands and Denmark, through two case studies per country. This will be done by conducting qualitative interviews with municipal officers working with the subject. The characteristics of how it is established within the municipality, as well as the details of the activities will be researched. Consequently, the main research question that this thesis will attempt to answer is: *What characterises town twinning when comparing Gladsaxe Kommune, Jammerbugt Kommune, Gemeente 's-Hertogenbosch, and Gemeente Leiden? If there are differences, can they be explained by means of the respective governance structures?* While this is the primary aim of the research, obtaining an answer to the following subquestion is perhaps of equal importance: *To what extent does the practise of town twinning relate to the improvement of a European identity?*

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework of this research will be presented, where previous literature will be discussed, as well as theories of decentralisation and Europeanisation. The method section will subsequently explain how this study addresses the elements of ontology and epistemology; my approach to obtaining and processing data and also the study's limitations. The results will then provide an overview of my interviews

with the municipal officers, which will be analysed in the discussions chapter. Here, suggestions for future research will also be discussed. Finally, concluding statements on the implications will be featured in the conclusions section.

1.1 Operationalisation of research questions

This study wishes to investigate the characteristics of town twinning in Denmark and the Netherlands through the investigation of two municipalities per country. Furthermore, we wish to explain their structure by means of the respective governance structures. This implies that our theoretical framework will first establish the comparability of both countries, with regard to their local governance structures. We will draw upon dichotomies of both states and studies of local governance in both countries. Then, we will investigate how municipalities have used town twinning as a means to become internationally active, by presenting a short history of the evolution of town twinning. In addition, we will take a closer look at previous research on town twinning matters, also by incorporating examinations of Danish and Dutch local authorities and the way they have responded to international activity. This will be the framework in which we embed our first research question. Our second research question explores what role the European Union plays in town twinning practise for our four cases. We wish to embed the second question into a brief historical narrative on European integration (of which town twinning is considered an instrument) and the current policy aims as they are incorporated into the objectives of the DG for communication and the Europe for Citizens Programme funding scheme.

We chose to conduct qualitative interviews with town twinning officers in the chosen municipalities by means of a standardised questionnaire. Several variables were chosen as topics for research: general features of partnerships, main actors, municipal view and aims, criteria for funding, municipal budget, activities, and European identity.

2. Theoretical perspectives - theories and processes that have shaped town twinning into its current form

Only few scholars have researched the topic of town twinning, and comparing cases for the Netherlands and Denmark, to our knowledge, has not been done before. The fundamental basis of this thesis lies with the notion that town twinning is an expression of local level governance. Therefore, it is essential to become familiar with the comparability of governance structures in Denmark and the Netherlands. As such, if there are differences, what effects can we expect them to have on town twinning in our research subjects? The first part of this chapter (2.1) offers insight into the differences and similarities between Danish and Dutch governance, in which special attention is paid to the local level. Dichotomies of the organisation of the state by Rokkan & Urwin is used, and the monitoring reports by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities have been valuable sources for the description of local governance structures. Subsequently, the second part of this chapter (2.2) will revolve around town twinning as a strategy for local authorities to be involved in international activity: a short overview of its history, current town twinning practise, and how Dutch and Danish local authorities have responded to such international activity. The final section of the theoretical framework (2.3) describes how town twinning has become an instrument for European integration and how town twinning is incorporated into the Europe for Citizens Programme.

2.1 Establishing comparability between Denmark and the Netherlands

2.1.1 The organisation of governance

Many differences exist between countries in the way governance is organised, as each nation's history and background is different. The relationship between territory and administration is dominated by the economic, social and political system.⁸ The division of power in most countries is laid down in a constitution which remains to be the primary

⁸ Bennett, R. *Territory and Administration in Europe*. London: Pinter Publishers Limited, 1989. & Goldsmith, M. and Klausen, K. K. *European Integration Ad Local Government*. Cheltenham, UK and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997.

instrument. This also means that the formal power of municipal authorities is established within the constitution.⁹ Since 1985, there is also a supranational strategy for the safeguarding of local authorities' autonomy: the Charter of Local Self-Governments. Both Denmark and the Netherlands have signed this. We may learn from Goldsmith, over the past fifty years, central governments in European countries have developed considerably. From the onset of the introduction of the welfare state, intergovernmental relationships have been changing: a growing amount of strain was put on central governments, as a result of which they realised an administrative reorganisation was in place, allowing local authorities to gain in power and responsibilities. During the period of the 1960s all the way into the 1980s, a wave of decentralisation characterised European countries; Denmark and the Netherlands were among them.¹⁰ In the same period, other forms of reform such as New Public Management (NPM) hit the European stage, through its popularity in Great Britain.¹¹ NPM was a more business-like approach to local government, referred to as 'entrepreneurial government', which focused on performance and efficiency.¹² Danish governance has continued to reform and evolve, to increase efficiency with regard to the public sector, which ultimately has resulted in modifications that have come into act in 2007.¹³ The Dutch, however, were enthusiastic at first, because NPM was a way of dealing with economic hardship of that time, but reforms stagnated during the 1990s as a result of citizens' heavy criticism.¹⁴ Goldsmith remarks that this is the essential difference between Danish and Dutch local governance; in the Netherlands, central government remains strong, while in Denmark self-governance is a key element at the local level.¹⁵ The work of Bennett explains this difference by means of the categorisation of Leemans, according to

⁹ Goldsmith, M. . "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 92.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 94-97.

¹¹ Hendriks, F., Tops, P. "Between Democracy and Efficiency: Trends in Local Government Reform in the Netherlands and Germany." *Public Administration* 77 (1999): 133.

¹² Pollitt, C., Dan, S. "Searching for Impacts in Performance-Oriented Management Reform: A Review of European Literature." *Public Performance & Management Review* 37, no. 1 (September 2013): 9.

¹³ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Local and Regional Democracy in Denmark." In *Explanatory Memorandum*, edited by Smith, K., Behr, K., Ruocco, R., Strasbourg 2005.

¹⁴ Hendriks, F., Tops, P. "Between Democracy and Efficiency: Trends in Local Government Reform in the Netherlands and Germany." *Public Administration* 77 (1999): 137-138.

¹⁵ Goldsmith, M. . "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 97.

whom the Dutch have a fused system, which entails that local governments are under supervision of higher governmental levels, and their autonomy is protected in the constitution. Denmark, as a result of the board system, functions similarly, however, Danish municipalities are even more autonomous; which is why this is referred to as a split hierarchy system.¹⁶

We have also drawn upon the work of Rokkan & Urwin, who have attempted to categorise countries by means of the way governance has been organised. They have incorporated regional (bottom-up) and state (top-down) strategies in their typology of Europe. Rokkan and Urwin's research acknowledges that regions may have their own identities and may affect the way in which the state is organised, or result in tension between the local level and the national level. We may conclude from this that their theory will explain how unified or divided our chosen countries are. Their dichotomy distinguishes between centres and peripheries. Centres are defined by being „priveleged locations” in which political control, economic dominance and cultural standardisation is applied.¹⁷ This goes without saying that states may have multiple centres, depending on the way the specific country is organised. Peripheries, on the other hand, are dependent structures in political, economical and cultural fields, in so far that its existence implies that there is also one or more centres.¹⁸ Rokkan and Urwin's dichotomy is not yet finished, as they have created a framework of how centres and peripheries of nations respond to each other. Table 2.1. illustrates these strategies. At one end of the axis they have identified the way in which states have centralising strategies: the degree of standardisation versus federalising accommodation (collective decision making while the autonomy of peripheries and regions remain intact). The other end of the axis describes the relation to territory. Rokkan and Urwin mention two dimensions to this factor: membership space and territorial space. Membership space is what could be referred to as the sharing of an area, each of the local groups being a member to it, but which identify with their group rather than with the state. Territorial space, on the other hand, is the identification with a geographical area, and the

¹⁶ Bennett, R. *Territory and Administration in Europe*. London: Pinter Publishers Limited, 1989: ch. 1-2.

¹⁷ Rokkan, S., Urwin, D. W. *The Politics of Territorial Identity: Studies in European Regionalism*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1982: 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

motive for unification.¹⁹ It can be said that territorial space and standardisation by centres thus go hand in hand. By means of standardisation, centres will seek to have political, economical and cultural control. However, it must be noted that these are poles and thus, much variation exists when looking at specific countries, as the above terminology is interrelated. We may learn from table 2.1 that Denmark is more unified than the Netherlands, as the Dutch have some regional tension. Rokkan and Urwin view Denmark as a unitary state, territorial space predominant; whereas the Netherlands is a union state, territorial space dominant, but with strong membership space characteristics.

		Territory		Space/ identity characteristics	Membershi p	
		<i>Anti-centre</i>		<i>Peripheral protest</i>	<i>Regional tension</i>	<i>Covenant/ toleration</i>
Strategies of unification	<i>Centralising Unitary state</i>	France Denmark Norway Italy	Iceland, Sweden, Portugal, Austria	Finland, (Swedish Finns)	Belgium	(Berne)
	<i>Union state</i>	(Brittany), (Alsace), (Occitania), (Corsica), (Carinthia), (Sardinia)		Netherlands, United Kingdom, (Friesland), (Cornwall)	Spain, (Galicia), (Andalusia)	
	<i>Mechanical federalism</i>	(Alto Adige), (Val d'Aosta)		(Scotland), (Wales)	Germany, (Flanders), (Wallonia)	
	<i>Organic federalism</i>	(Faeroes)		(Northern Ireland)	(Bavaria), (Basques), (Catalonia)	Switzerland, (Jura)
<i>Accommodating</i>						

Table 2.1: Typology of state-building and nation-building processes in Western Europe, by Rokan and Urwin.²⁰

2.1.2 Municipal governance in Denmark

Denmark has three administrative levels: the national government (staten), counties (amterne), and municipalities (kommunerne). Both counties and municipalities are a part

¹⁹ Rokkan, S., Urwin, D. W. The Politics of Territorial Identity: Studies in European Regionalism. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1982: 8.

²⁰ Ibid.: 12.

of an umbrella organisation; for all ninety-eight municipalities there is the Local Government Denmark, Kommunernes Landsforening (KL);²¹ and for the five regions in Denmark there is the Association for Danish Regions (Danske Regioner).²² The formation of the municipalities has been subject to change over time; prior to 1970 the number was 1300, after which it was reduced to 275.²³ Currently, however, there are ninety-eight, after the reformations of 2007.²⁴ The Local Government Act of 1968 governs the municipalities' autonomy through a set of rules.²⁵ As can be noted from the report by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE), municipalities control various administrative services, such as social welfare and health services, but they also have a role in taxes. In 2008, fifty-one percent of total public expenditure was administered by regions and municipalities.²⁶ The kommunerne are relatively autonomous when it comes to politics and economics, which could relate to the fact that „fifty-five percent of their revenues are derived from their own local income tax, 25% comes from special taxes and service payments, 10% is direct state subsidy and 10% is state funding”.²⁷ Important bodies in the Danish local system are the city council and the mayor. The city council is elected every four years, and they appoint the mayor.²⁸ The mayor is head of the entire local administration and chairs the city council meetings. The mayor makes sure all council decisions are implemented. Goldsmith and Larsen describe the mayor as the most important local leader, involved in many different fields and subjects, as a ‚City King’.²⁹ The reforms from 2007 have primarily sought to address the issue of quality and efficiency,

²¹ For more information see website: <http://www.kl.dk>

²² For more information see website: <http://www.regioner.dk>

²³ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Local and Regional Democracy in Denmark." In *Explanatory Memorandum*, edited by Smith, K., Behr, K., Ruocco, R., Strasbourg 2005: 4.

²⁴ KL, „Local Government Reform.” Issued on: <http://www.kl.dk/English/Local-Government-Reform/>

²⁵ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Local and Regional Democracy in Denmark." In *Explanatory Memorandum*, edited by Smith, K., Behr, K., Ruocco, R., Strasbourg 2005: 5.

²⁶ Local Government Denmark. "The Danish Local Government System." 2009: 5.

²⁷ Klausen, K.K. "Danish Local Government: Integrating into the Eu?". Chap. 2 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1997: 17.

²⁸ Local Government Denmark. "The Danish Local Government System." 2009: 6.

²⁹ Larsen, H., Goldsmith, M. "Local Political Leadership: Nordic Style." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28, no. 1 (March 2004): 127-129.

especially with regard to the future. Problems arose due to small size of counties and municipalities. As a result, municipalities have been assigned more tasks; increased amount of welfare services.³⁰

2.1.3 Municipal governance in the Netherlands

Similarly, the Netherlands also has three administrative levels: national government (overheid), provinces (provincies), and municipalities (gemeentes). Dutch municipalities are a part of the umbrella organisation VNG, the Association for Dutch Municipalities³¹ and provinces are a part of the association for Dutch provinces, IPO.³² On the first of January 2013, the Netherlands counted 408 municipalities.³³ The right of self-government for local authorities has been protected in the constitution. The specific rules for local governance is laid down in the Municipalities Act (gemeentewet). Provinces are also monitors to municipalities. Municipal services are within education, health, justice, and police, in which they frequently cooperate with private organisations.³⁴ However, it can be noted from Wolters and CLRAE, that the sovereignty of the state remains highly important. Eighty percent of the municipalities revenue comes from the national government.³⁵ Municipalities are allowed to levy taxes, but this only accounts for 8.8% of total municipal income.³⁶ This entails that local and national governments are working together, which Goldsmith calls a system of co-governance.³⁷ The city council is head of the local administration, and the mayor and aldermen are its executives. The mayor is both chairman

³⁰ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Local and Regional Democracy in Denmark." In *Explanatory Memorandum*, edited by Smith, K., Behr, K., Ruocco, R., Strasbourg 2005.

³¹ For more information see website: <http://www.vng.nl>

³² For more information see website: <http://www.ipo.nl>

³³ Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. "Gemeentelijke indeling op 1 januari 2013." Accessed December 2013. <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/methoden/classificaties/overzicht/gemeentelijke-indeling/2013/default.htm>

³⁴ Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 42.

³⁵ Goldsmith, M. . "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 93.

³⁶ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Local and Regional Democracy in Netherlands." In *Explanatory Memorandum*, edited by K. Kvaloy Smith, O. A., Schefold, D., 30. Strasbourg, 2005: 12.

³⁷ Goldsmith, M. . "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 98.

to the city council and to the mayor and aldermen, but also has a special position with regard to national government and the crown, as these institutions are involved in the mayor's election. The CLRAE has criticised the appointment of the mayor as it does not correspond with rules established in the Charter. The mayor is currently appointed by the King, by recommendation of the local council, as well as the Minister of Interior and Kingdom Relations (Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koningsrelaties). The CLRAE is of the opinion that this goes against democratic principles and does not belong in the system of modern states. Several attempts have been made to establish direct elections for the appointment of the mayor, for example during the years 2005 and 2006, a bill was even proposed to the House of Representatives,³⁸ but revoked in 2007.³⁹ Thus, the municipal situation has remained the same. Consequently, it can be concluded that there exists a paradoxical situation in the Dutch administrative system. The constitution on the one hand ensures autonomy for local authorities, whereas, in practise, their power is relatively limited as a result of state regulations. CLRAE mentions Dutch municipalities have found ways to maintain as much self-governance as possible.

2.1.4 Concluding statements about presented structures

We may conclude from the above that there exists a difference in autonomy between Dutch and Danish local authorities. We expect this difference to reflect in our analysis of town twinning, as Danish local government has much more freedom compared to Dutch municipalities, with regard to revenue. Thus, we formulate the following hypothesis, *H1: the degree of autonomy with regard to revenue in the respective countries will reflect in our research cases*. Another difference between both countries is the formal head of the municipal authority, which is the city council in the Netherlands and the mayor in Denmark. Consequently we formulate a second hypothesis, *H2: the continuation of town twinning will be safeguarded by the mayor in Denmark and the city council in the Netherlands*.

³⁸ Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. "Local and Regional Democracy in Netherlands." In *Explanatory Memorandum*, edited by K. Kvaloy Smith, O. A., Schefold, D., 30. Strasbourg, 2005: 7.

³⁹ Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal. "Wet Verkiezing Burgemeester." Accessed December 2013. On: http://www.eerstekamer.nl/wetsvoorstel/29865_wet_verkiezing_burgemeester

2.2 Town twinning as an instrument of power for local authorities

As a consequence of industrialisation and urbanisation, local authorities across Europe were drawn to each other for support on a variety of issues. This phenomenon is what is also referred to as municipal internationalism, the international movement of local authorities.⁴⁰ Ultimately, in 1913 the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) was founded, a supranational organisation to formalise the networking and exchange of knowledge,⁴¹ and, as it is stated by Ewen and Hebbert, utilitarian and, after WWI, peaceful ends.⁴² After WWII, reconciliation between France and Germany was a primary aim in the establishment of Union Internationale des Maires (UIM). This resulted in the first twinning agreement in 1950 between Montbéliard and Ludwigsburg. Another group of European mayors founded the Council of European Municipalities (CEM, currently known as Council of European Municipalities and Regions, CEMR) in 1951. Both groups aimed at a unified Europe, and both used town twinning as the mechanism to it, which is why, as Großpietsch and Ewen & Hebbert state, a town twinning war erupted. CEM and UIM had contrasting ideas with regard to Europe's unification. Where UIM focused on the unity between France and Germany, CEM had a wider approach and wished to create a front against Communism.⁴³ Weyreter claimed this to be the way to prevent another dictator to come into force.⁴⁴ CEM recognised the democratic autonomy of the local government, as opposed to the Soviet Union's international plans.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it is of importance to mention the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in the same year as the CEM. Consequently, the CEM approached unification in a political way, by uniting political officials and elites, whereas UIM celebrated unification by citizen

⁴⁰ Ewen, S., Hebbert, M. "European Cities in a Networked World During the Long 20th Century." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25 (2007): 328.

⁴¹ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 75.

⁴² Ewen, S., Hebbert, M. "European Cities in a Networked World During the Long 20th Century." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25 (2007): 330.

⁴³ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 90.

⁴⁴ Weyreter, M. "Germany and the Town Twinning Movement." *Contemporary Review* 281 no. 1644 (January 2003): 37-43.

⁴⁵ Ewen, S., Hebbert, M. "European Cities in a Networked World During the Long 20th Century." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25 (2007): 333.

encounters. According to Ewen and Hebbert, CEM, as such, had a federal aim, which responded to aims fostered by the ECSC. Also, the CEM was quite deliberate, because they drew up standardised town twinning contracts to get municipalities on the way.⁴⁶ This is something the CEM(R) has remained to do. After 1989, the number of twin towns with former Soviet cities grew. Papagaroufali referred to this as the second wave of twin towns.⁴⁷ As time evolved, and an continuously increasing amount of towns engaged in town twinning, the European Community (EC) grew in power as well. This ultimately had an effect on local administration, accepting binding treaties and other legislative rules laid down by the EU. This is what Goldsmith refers to as formal integration. The EU constrains the ability of national governments to operate independently of fellow member states. This also occurs informally through, as Goldsmith calls it, a „bargaining network/game” between multiple levels of governance, or through the EU’s funding schemes.⁴⁸ Groups of organisations, institutions, or people have been able to apply to a variety of grants for projects in various areas. Goldsmith has argued:

Partnership has obliged central governments to work with cities and regions in developing appropriate programmes designed to use the funds, whilst at the same time obliging the sub-national units to develop local partnerships with other bodies drawn from the public, private and voluntary sectors. [...] The Commission itself has adopted an increasingly controlling role over the the operation of the structural funds [...]. Since the late 1990s the Commission has become stricter in terms of only supporting those projects which fully meet the criteria.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ewen, S., Hebbert, M. "European Cities in a Networked World During the Long 20th Century." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25 (2007): 333.

⁴⁷ Papagaroufali, E. "Town Twinning in Greece: Reconstructing Local Histories through Translocal Sensory-Affective Performances." *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 3 (2005): 335.

⁴⁸ Goldsmith, M. . "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 103.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: 105-106.

New town twinning partnerships continued to establish, but after the year of 2000, they stopped growing as fast as before.⁵⁰ Falkenhain et al. have suggested this to be a result of saturation, because it is argued that towns cannot establish an unlimited amount of partnerships.⁵¹ On the other hand, Ercole et al. have described that municipalities have increasingly been involved in various forms of international cooperation, next to twinning. Municipalities have roles in transnational networks, cross-border collaboration, and advisory councils of European institutions.⁵² This means that it is possible that from the year 2000, towns have increasingly been engaged in international activity outside of town twinning. Transnational city networks can be said to be an evolved form of town twinning, as twinning is viewed as a primarily „informal programme of social and cultural events.”⁵³ City networks, on the other hand, can be said to transcend such cultural exchange and can be both longterm and purely project based. Collaboration in networks is beneficial on political and economical grounds, as it is centred around particular topics and involve partners on various levels.⁵⁴ It is interesting to mention that Wolters refers to the building of networks as a popular effect of EU-affairs on Dutch local governance.⁵⁵ A 1993 survey revealed that fifty-eight percent of Dutch municipalities cooperated with communes abroad, and those that did not either felt „no need for transnational contact”, or „international cooperation was either a central government responsibility or should result from private initiatives.”⁵⁶ The type of international collaboration that Dutch municipalities engage in varies per municipality. For example, there exists a difference between large and smaller cities. Larger cities, such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, can predominantly be found in networks, as they seek political and economical collaboration over cultural

⁵⁰ Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 240-241.

⁵¹ Ibid: 235, 240.

⁵² Ercole, E., Walters, M. & Goldsmith, M. "Cities, Networks, Euregions, European Offices." In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by Klausen, K.K. and Goldsmith, M.. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 219.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 46-47.

⁵⁶ Ibid.: 47-48.

cooperation.⁵⁷ Rotterdam is one of the founders of the Eurocities network. Twinning on the other hand, has been popular regardless of size of the municipality. However, as we may learn from a news article in *Binnenlands Bestuur*, town twinning numbers, especially in large cities, have been declining in recent years.⁵⁸ As previously stated, this could be related to the fact that town twinning mainly revolves around cultural exchange, Wolters: „Twinning arrangements are mostly about cultural ties (82%) and recreational exchanges (66%), rather than about technical assistance (26%) or economic matters (20%).”

Furthermore, the formal aspect of town twinning is minimal: „Seventy five percent of the twinning arrangements involve less than monthly meetings. If politicians meet at all across the border, informal board meetings (49%) are normal, joint decision making (4%) and formal board meetings (18%) are exceptional.”⁵⁹ In the case of Danish municipalities a similar image exists. Klausen states that one way to notice EU activity is the fact that nearly every municipality is engaged in town twinning.⁶⁰ However, this does not necessarily have to be the case, as this depends on definition. Even though town twinning is considered EU activity, this does not mean that municipalities themselves view it as such. Moreover, Denmark engaged in town twinning even before they were a part of the European Union. It can be said that the most popular form of international collaboration at the municipal level in Denmark is town twinning. Larger cities are also part of transnational networks and some even have offices in Brussels (e.g. Århus and Odense).⁶¹ It becomes apparent from Klausen that EU activity is largely centred around large cities. The most common motive for involvement in international activity is the desire for economic benefit and this even relates to increased involvement in twinning.⁶² It has been suggested by Jayne et al., however, that the effects of such economical strategies are difficult to measure. Jayne et al. have highlighted that hospitality is a key element in the

⁵⁷ Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 48-49.

⁵⁸ Rijken, K. „Stedenbanden de dupe van crisis” *Binnenlands Bestuur* (16 August 2013).

⁵⁹ Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 49.

⁶⁰ Klausen, K.K. "Danish Local Government: Integrating into the Eu?". Chap. 2 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1997: 21.

⁶¹ Ibid.: 23-26.

⁶² Ibid.: 28-29.

evaluation of town twinning's significance: „twinning relationships are maintained through ‘rituals’ of hospitality, performed as part of the mutual benefits of the unmeasured/unmeasurable outcomes of twinning activities and as such are *the* main way in which partnerships are judged and celebrated as successful and worthwhile.”⁶³ At the same time, however, it has been discovered by Furmankiewicz by means of a survey, analysing 240 Polish municipalities that as a result of town twinning tangible effects have been observed in categories such as: „health care and rescue missions (18% of all partnerships), social problem solving (15%) and education, sport and recreation (14%).”⁶⁴ It was stated that the effects were even more noticeable between neighbouring regions.⁶⁵ The influence of proximity in town twinning practise has been confirmed by Falkenhain et al.. They have demonstrated twinning partnerships are more likely to occur between neighbouring countries than those that are farther away. Territorial proximity is strongly related to shared history and culture.⁶⁶ Proximity as such, can be considered a facilitator to the town twinning affairs. Another important facilitator, or rather instrument, of the town twinning phenomenon is monetary funding. A lack of financial resources has proven to be hazardous to town twinning activity.⁶⁷ In the late 1980s, the EU acted upon this notion by establishing the first funding scheme for town twinning.⁶⁸ The details to this process will be elaborated upon in the next section. Another obstacle to the continuation of town twinning has been reported to be the lack of support of the authoritative body of the municipality.⁶⁹ Being at the head of the municipal government, the opinions of the people that work there is of influence to the implementation of town twinning. Furmankiewicz has explained that a

⁶³ Jayne, M., Hubbard, P, Bell, D. "Worlding a City: Twinning and Urban Theory." *City: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 15, no. 1 (2011): 31.

⁶⁴ Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 155.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 235.

⁶⁷ Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 153.

⁶⁸ Adonnino, P. "A People's Europe, Report from the Ad Hoc Committee." In *Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 7/85*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1985.

⁶⁹ Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 153.

change in city council can result in a lack of activity, because the officials are not convinced of town twinning's significance.⁷⁰ A similar image exist with regard to municipalities' activity with regard to the EU. In Denmark there are municipalities that have not been taking any initiative to be active with regard to EU matters, which according to Klausen, can relate to the attitudes of single politicians and municipal officers. Their opinions can either be proactive, reactive or counteractive and affect the course the municipality takes in international affairs. Most Danish municipalities are reactive in their approach towards the EU. This entails that they take after the example of proactive towns, which most frequently are big cities, and are slow to coping with EU affairs.⁷¹ This also means that the EU is hardly noticeable at the local level.⁷² Being one of the founding fathers to the EU, it is surprising that various scholars⁷³ have reported that Dutch municipalities have had little interest in supranational affairs. Wolters has claimed that this is a result of ignorance and that it is irrelevant in their view. He clarified: „[They] have to be stimulated from a central point in the organisation, another reason why most communes are so reactive, rather than proactive, in their approach towards the European Union, its policies and their effects.”⁷⁴

As it appears, the Netherlands and Denmark have responded similarly to supranational forces. In both countries, municipalities are primarily reactive to European Union affairs. This passive attitude, apart from size and staff occupation, has been explained - in both cases- as the result of the lack of action taken by politicians and local officials, as they do not always act rationally and in the common interest.⁷⁵ One may then wonder where that

⁷⁰ Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 153.

⁷¹ Klausen, K.K. "Danish Local Government: Integrating into the Eu?". Chap. 2 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1997: 36.

⁷² *Ibid.*: 19.

⁷³ Goldsmith, M. "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 91-112. & Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997.

⁷⁴ Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 55.

⁷⁵ Klausen, K.K. "Danish Local Government: Integrating into the Eu?". Chap. 2 In *European Integration and Local Government*, Cheltenham, UK and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1997: 35-36.

leaves the citizens of Danish and Dutch municipalities. How do citizens, if at all, influence the actions of the municipality's political body? While euroscepticism has been increasing throughout Europe and has become significantly evident since the rejection of the Constitution of Europe, it can be asked whether such a stance towards the EU has become more of a political phenomenon than representative of citizen opinions. It has been discovered that the Dutch have shown the strongest increase in euroscepticism between 1994 and 2004, as opposed to other member states, the Danish not similarly as much.⁷⁶ As a result of this trend, Steenbergen et al. have investigated the interconnectedness of politics and the population. They have discovered that such a link exists and runs both ways: citizens affect political elites and political elites affect them as well.⁷⁷ To what extent this reflects upon town twinning has not been reported. However, according to Großpietsch town twinning exchanges have the potential to affect citizens' awareness of the EU and solidarity towards other European citizens.⁷⁸ At the same time, town twinning has been described by Jayne et al. to be a mechanism that creates empathy across borders, but such extra-national activity does not entail that nationalities are replaced by transnationalities, but rather: „both interact, shaping people's life-worlds in different ways”.⁷⁹

We have previously established that town twinning, in its foundation, commenced after WWII as an instrument of power for local authorities. However, we have also learnt from Wolters, that current town twinning practise does not involve the meetings of local politicians as much, but rather comprises of cultural and recreational exchanges.⁸⁰ At the same time, evidence by Furmankiewicz suggests that this is not necessarily the case in all European countries.⁸¹ What, then, is the essence of town twinning? Voin has described that

⁷⁶ Lubbers, M., Scheepers, P. "Divergent Trends of Euroscepticism in Countries and Regions of the European Union." *European Journal of Political Research* 49 (2010): 801.

⁷⁷ Steenbergen, M. R., Edwards, E. E., de Vries, C. E. "Who's Cueing Whom?: Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration." *European Union Politics* 8 (2007): 14, 29-30.

⁷⁸ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 299.

⁷⁹ Jayne, M., Hubbard, P, Bell, D. "Worlding a City: Twinning and Urban Theory." *City: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 15, no. 1 (2011): 32.

⁸⁰ Wolters, M. "The Netherlands." Chap. 3 In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by M. and Klausen Goldsmith, K. K. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997: 49.

⁸¹ Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 155.

town twinning in essence is a reenactment of previously established traditions that were created during the reconstruction era as a way to enhance European fellowship. According to him, such traditions were fashioned to stimulate certain values of friendship and solidarity, which currently serve as a reminder of continued peace.⁸² Traditions are intertwined with the issue of hospitality, as exchanges, whether political, or related to citizens, do not only imply the going, but also the receiving. According to Jayne et al. different expressions of such hospitality, both on a political level, as on citizen level, have become key aspects in the continuation of town twinning.⁸³

2.3 Town twinning from a European Union perspective

Another aspect to the town twinning phenomenon, is its importance to the European Union. Its history is closely tied to the establishment of the EU and it is currently one of the instruments for fostering European citizenship, as can be noted from the annual activity report for the Directorate General for Communication of 2011.⁸⁴ A major aspect as to why town twinning remains to be such a valuable aspect of European traits, is the fact that it occurs at the local level, involving many citizens in different countries. Falkenhain et al. have captured the essence of this value for the EU by means of the following: „increased interaction with people from other countries is positively correlated with the development of a European identity and support for European integration.”⁸⁵

Throughout its history, the European Union has had unification as one of its aims. With the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), in 1951, and the European Economic Community (EEC) later on in 1957, it can be said that unification in Europe was primarily aimed at politics and economics. It becomes clear from the work of Shore, that from the post-war phase up until the 1980s, and more specifically 1992 (Maastricht treaty)

⁸² Voin, A. "Europe from the Bottom Up: Town Twinning in France During the Cold War." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 4 (2002): 628, 630.

⁸³ Jayne, M., Hubbard, P, Bell, D. "Worlding a City: Twinning and Urban Theory." *City: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 15, no. 1 (2011): 31-32.

⁸⁴ European Commission. "Annual Activity Report 2011." edited by DG Communication, 1-34, 2012.

⁸⁵ Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 230.

a neo-functionalist approach was upheld, as it was thought that integration came hand in hand with economic prosperity.⁸⁶ This means that it was expected that cultural integration would occur as a spill-over effect and that a European identity would develop automatically. As such, public support was not a main priority for the European Community (EC) elites.⁸⁷ Parallel to the development of the EC, was the development of town twinning, as a way to ensure reconciliation, but also to create a front of local level authorities to protect their autonomy against the ECSC.⁸⁸ This front was established in the Council of European Municipalities (CEM). Großpietsch writes that CEM „regarded town twinning as a way of bringing European municipalities together in order to ensure a final political union.”⁸⁹ From the 1980s, a shift could be noticed: the EC elites put major emphasis on culture. It becomes apparent from the work of Shore that various strategies aimed at creating a „consciousness of sharing a common heritage of ideas and values” were adopted, to which is also referred as the state of europeanising.⁹⁰ In 1984, the European Council decided an ad hoc Committee should be set up to investigate and propose measures for the enhancement of a European identity among citizens.⁹¹ In 1985, the report by the *ad hoc Committee A People's Europe* described town twinning as a measure to facilitate solidarity and mutual understanding between citizens of member states. The Committee suggested the EC should encourage such partnerships by „creating favourable conditions for their development”.⁹² As a result, the EC offered the first funding opportunities for town twinning in 1989.⁹³ Thus, it can be said that by offering funding, town twinning also became a direct tool for europeanisation. Since 2007, funding for town

⁸⁶ Shore, C. *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. London: Routledge, 2000: 1-20.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: 16.

⁸⁸ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 89.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*: 100.

⁹⁰ Shore, C. *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. London: Routledge, 2000: 25.

⁹¹ European Council. "Meeting at Fontainebleau: Conclusions of the Presidency." Fontainebleau 25-26 June, 1984.

⁹² Adonnino, P. "A People's Europe, Report from the Ad Hoc Committee." In *Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 7/85*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1985.

⁹³ Falkenhain, et al.. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 233.

twinning has been incorporated in the Europe for Citizens Programme.⁹⁴ A major objective of this programme is the fostering of European citizenship and enhancing citizens' understanding of the EU's history and diversity. In the Europe for Citizens Programme Guide 2007-2013, it can be read that the EU supports two types of activities: firstly, the exchange of citizens between at least two twinning partners; secondly, projects initiated by a series of town twinning links, with municipalities from at least four different countries.⁹⁵ From the annual activity report of DG for Communication, in which twinning activities are indicators for fostering European citizenship, we may learn that the EU stresses the importance of town twinning networks over citizens' meetings.⁹⁶ However, when looking at the number of applications for both town twinning measures in the Programme results for 2011, we find that 1433 applications for citizens exchanges⁹⁷ had been admitted and 166 networks of twinned towns.⁹⁸ Thus, if the EU's priority lies with networks of twinned towns, it does not reflect in the number of applications. Großpietsch suggests that this could be related to the degree of complexity for the application of twinning networks.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Prolonged in the programme for 2014-2020.

⁹⁵ DG for Communication - EACEA. "Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013." In *Programme Guide*, 2013. Available at: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/documents/2013/guide_2013_en_final%20.pdf.

⁹⁶ European Commission. "Annual Activity Report 2011." edited by DG Communication, 1-34, 2012.

⁹⁷ EACEA. "Citizens' Projects 2011." In *Citizenship statistics*, accessed December 2013. On: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/results_compendia/documents/2010-2011/succes_rate_cp_2011.pdf.

⁹⁸ EACEA. "Networks of Twinned Towns 2011 All Phases." In *Citizenship statistics*, accessed December 2013. On: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/results_compendia/documents/2010-2011/ntt_synthese_2011_mb.pdf

⁹⁹ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 236-245.

3. Method

In previous studies, town twinning has predominantly been assessed by means of historical narratives and by investigating the relationship between town twinning and the European Union. The current research aims to contribute to the field by both exploring the features of town twinning in practise, as well as taking a closer look at governance structures as a way to explain some of the characteristics. As Europe as a whole is a very large area for research, it was decided to limit the analysis to two countries. It was a requirement for both countries to be relatively similar, as this allows us to investigate comparability and draw conclusions that have a slightly larger impact, than they would if each case were completely different. It was decided that the best method to adopt for this study, was to conduct a qualitative research with four cases, two of each in each country, by means of interviews with municipal officers. As there was a limited amount of time, but nonetheless our aim was to contribute in the best way possible, it was decided that four interviews would be conducted. This research has a sociological approach, by attempting to investigate how town twinning has been structured within the municipality, but also the relationship between these local governments and the citizens. We are, for example, interested in investigating the top-down and bottom-up forces within town twinning practise. It must be said that this relationship will be investigated through the view of the municipality only, therefore we must be cautious in our conclusions when it comes to the response of the society.

3.1 Qualitative research

The motivation for qualitative research can be explained in two-fold: firstly, only few previous studies have investigated the characteristics of current town twinning practise, which makes it essential to gain knowledge of this phenomenon first-hand, and from people who work within this subject on a daily basis. Secondly, qualitative research matches the objectives for the current research in the best way, because we wish to describe four cases, and in order to conclude what town twinning comprises for these cases, a thorough description is essential. One way to conduct an in-depth analysis is by

means of interviews. Conducting interviews will allow us to gain a broad picture of the specific cases. It was decided that, with regard to the research question, the selection of the municipalities was the following: in order to establish what happens in the practise of town twinning, it would be most useful to select municipalities that are active within town twinning. By active it is meant that the partnerships are still alive and activities take place. It was decided that the associations for municipalities in both countries, KL and VNG, would be useful to inquire about municipalities that are considered active in their respective countries. We decided to commence with addressing Dutch municipalities. The Association for Dutch Municipalities, VNG, was able to assist us in getting in touch with Leiden municipality and the representative employee. Interestingly, VNG is listed with the CEMR as a 'Town Twinning Officer', the organisation that monitors the continuation of town twinning from a national perspective, but it became clear from our talk with VNG that the organisation had no such actual role. We got in touch with interviewee A, Leiden's town twinning officer, and the interview was set for the second of July. As VNG only provided us with one municipality, we searched for a second municipality through the internet. The selection was purely random, with the prerequisite of the town having active relationships. The second municipality that we approached was that of Utrecht, however, from the interview it appeared that Utrecht was terminating their town twinning activities, and thus, it was decided another Dutch municipality needed to be interviewed. This was conducted with the municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch. With regard to the Danish municipalities, KL was not able to be as helpful as VNG, which is why we decided to conduct a search for suitable Danish municipalities ourselves. This search was yet again random. Firstly, we were able to plan an interview with Gladsaxe and after some rejections we also managed to conduct an interview with Jammerbugt. An overview of the approached municipalities can be found in table 3.1. Falkenhain et al. have investigated the ratio of number of twinnings per million inhabitants (based of the number of twinnings per country provided by CEMR data in 2010): for Denmark, with a total of 932 town twinning partnerships, there exists a ration of 168 per million citizens; on the other hand the Netherlands had a total of 722 partnerships, but with a ratio of 44 per million inhabitants.¹⁰⁰ This explains that there is a difference between the number of partnerships

¹⁰⁰ Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 237.

that are found in our Danish and Dutch municipalities. However, we must realise that there could be various amounts of reasons why this difference exists.

Municipality	Inhabitants	Twin Towns	Reference
Leiden	118750	5	A
's-Hertogenbosch	141895	2	B
Gladsaxe	66041	17	C
Jammerbugt	38957	4	D

Table 3.1: Overview of selected municipalities and general features.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

It was decided that the best way to conduct our data, was by means of semi-structured interviews with municipal officers directly involved in town twinning. Our research is explorative and primarily empirical in its nature and wishes to answer questions about the characteristics and organisational structure of town twinning within municipalities in the Netherlands and Denmark. As a result, it is useful to compose interview questions that are directed to obtain information about managerial, executive and evaluative issues, but also allow the interviewee to elaborate and freely explain and associate with related issues. Thus, we believed semi-structured interviews would give us the best and broadest image of town twinning in our chosen cases. At the same time, however, we wished to be able to compare the four cases, which required some form of structure and recurring elements. Consequently, a model applicable to all four cases was established, addressing organisational structure, but also the content of twinning activities. In the latter, the questions are directed towards the reasoning behind the activities, and this will allow us to draw comparisons to the EU's view. The questions have been directed towards European town twinning, as this is our point of interest, but also because many municipalities today have partners outside of Europe (Leiden, Gladsaxe). As a consequence of much internet documentation, some interview questions were already answered from the information provided on the municipalities' websites, but we decided to discuss each question during the actual interview regardless. The interview model was first established in Dutch and

conducted with the Dutch municipalities, after which it was translated into English, for the use of both interviews with the Danish municipalities. See *Appendix 1* for the interview questions in both languages. For our convenience, it was decided that when referring to European town twinning, Europe as a geographical location was meant.

We believed that the best way to conduct the interviews was by meeting the various town twinning officers in person, which is why we travelled to all municipalities, except for one. This entails that we have travelled from the Netherlands to Denmark in order to conduct the interview with Gladsaxe municipality. The interview with Jammerbugt municipality was conducted through Skype. The interviews were conducted in the period of July 2013 to January 2014. The length of the interviews varied, but lasted for an hour on average. Each interview has been recorded; audio files and transcriptions are available on request.

In order to assess our research question, we have used a condensation and categorisation measure to distinguish important fragments in the interviews that are essential to answering our question. This measure has been described by Kvale.¹⁰¹ After a process of thorough condensation, we have selected the following categories: general features of partnerships, main actors, municipal view on town twinning and aims, criteria for funding, municipal budget, activities, and European identity. As the interviews with Dutch municipalities were conducted in the Dutch language, useful and illustrative fragments were translated into English. The interviews with Danish municipalities were conducted in English, therefore used quotes are original texts. It should be mentioned that the informal name for the city of 's-Hertogenbosch is Den Bosch, therefore in some of interviewee B's quotes this name is used.

3.3 Limitations

Initially, we wished to conduct a quantitative survey analysis. However, with a limited amount of time and resources, it was decided that we would transfer our research aims to fit qualitative research. Moreover, this study could then serve as a pilot-study for

¹⁰¹ Kvale, S. *Methods of Analysis. An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage, 1996.

quantitative research. We realise that interviewing a mere four cases, might prove of limited academic use, but we have attempted to make use of these four cases the best we could, by creating an image as broad as possible and by avoiding generalising across other European states. Therefore, our results will describe the situations for our specific cases only. Moreover, we have attempted to make a larger impact, by not only describing the town twinning affairs in each municipality, but also by trying to explain this. It has also been a challenge, being only one person, not being connected to any institute with a large network, to get the cooperation of the municipalities. For this reason, the interviews have been conducted in such a spread manner, because we wrongly estimated the amount of time it would take prior to the actual interview.

4. Results

4.1 General features of partnerships

The amount of twin towns that are connected to our test subjects gemeente Leiden, gemeente 's-Hertogenbosch, Jammerbugt kommune, and Gladsaxe kommune, varies between cases. Details are presented in table 4.1.

Municipality	European twin towns out of total number of twin towns	Name and country of twinned European municipalities
Leiden	3/6	Oxford (UK), Torun (Poland), Krefeld (Germany)
's-Hertogenbosch	2/2	Leuven (Belgium), Trier (Germany)
Gladsaxe	15/17	Apeldoorn (Netherlands), Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf (Germany), Gagny (France), Haabersti (Estonia), Klagenfurt (Austria), Koszalin (Poland), Minden (Germany), Neubrandenburg (Germany), Prikkala (Finland), Renfrewshire/Paisley (UK), Ski (Norway), Solna (Sweden), Split (Croatia), Sutton (UK), Veszprém (Hungary)
Jammerbugt	4/4	Oppdal (Norway), Lindersberg (Sweden), Strzelce Krajenkie (Poland), Tornesch (Germany)

Table 4.1: Municipalities and twin towns.

As can be noted from table 4.1, Gladsaxe has the most twinning partnerships, and 's-Hertogenbosch the least. In each case, town twinning partnerships originated after the Second World War and in the period of the Cold War. The exception being Leuven, 's-Hertogenbosch's partner, they have been friends since the twelfth century.

Jammerbugt Kommune is also part of two triangle relationships with their twinning partners: Jammerbugt, Norwegian partner Oppdal and Swedish partner Lindesberg each have each other as twin towns; a similar situation exists with their partners in Poland, Strzelce Krajenkie, and Tornesch in Germany. Gladsaxe also has such a triangle relation with Neubrandenburg, Germany, and Koszalin in Poland. Furthermore, Gladsaxe is a part of a larger network with their twin towns Charlottenburg Wilmserdorf Germany, Gagny in France, Sutton in England, Minden in Germany; each of which have each other as a twin town.

In Leiden, the partnership with Krefeld is no longer active and therefore, the city council has decided to terminate the relationship.

4.2 Main actors

The main actors that are involved in the practise of town twinning are the political body of the municipality, town twinning officers, twinning associations, and citizens/citizens organisations. The following paragraphs explain the findings per actor.

4.2.1. Municipality

In the Netherlands, in both cases for Leiden and 's-Hertogenbosch, the city council is mentioned as the main actor for the continuation of the partnerships. In Denmark, on the other hand, the image is slightly different. Interviewees from Gladsaxe and Jammerbugt explained that the mayor plays an important part in town twinning, both in the continuation and in the initiation of activities. However, the city council, does have a say in the town twinning matter. For example, Jammerbugt Kommune, has been affected by the reform of Danish local governance of 2007, as a result of which their municipality became bigger, but the number of twin towns became smaller: „Before the reform, we were four municipalities and there was maybe 12 twinning cities, and now we have four. [...] it was the politicians who decided which we had to keep and which we had to let go.”

4.2.2 Town twinning officers

Each municipality has civil servants that work with the town twinning practise. However, in each municipality the town twinning officers' jobs have been organised differently. In 's-Hertogenbosch, interviewee B is involved in the organisation of activities that involve municipal officials. This is primarily in the celebration of anniversaries, once every few years. Other activities are initiated by twinning associations. Furthermore, interviewee B manages the granting of funds. In the case of Gladsaxe, there are two municipal officers

working with town twinning, worth 2 FTE, and there is another person that maintains relationships with schools in the municipalities, covering five to ten hours a week. Contact with all seventeen twin towns go through the twinning officers at Gladsaxe municipality. Within their responsibilities initiation, organisation and coordination of activities can be found. These exist on three levels (official meetings, study trips, citizen exchanges). Interviewee A, from Leiden municipality, spends about 3/4 FTE on the twinning affairs. She is assisted with regard to administrative tasks by another person, which sums up to a total of 1 FTE. Interviewee A is involved in the granting of funding, but also the organisation of official meetings, and multi-level projects (involving officers, professionals, citizens). Finally, in Jammerbugt municipality, interviewee D is in charge of organising official meetings and study trips. Interviewee D explains that town twinning is embodied in the municipality's policy 'international strategy' and comprises of a mere few hours a week: „In many weeks nothing happens, but in other times we have these get-togethers, and [then] I use all my time. I think maybe four hours a week, on a yearly basis 200 hours at the most. If the politicians wanted us to do something more about it, we could use a lot more time.” An overview is shown in table 4.2.

Municipality	interviewee	Total amount of FTE/hours spent on town twinning affairs in the municipality	Tasks
Leiden	A	1 FTE	Official meetings, multi-level projects
's-Hertogenbosch	B	0,03 FTE	Official meetings
Gladsaxe	C	2,2 FTE	Official meetings, study trips, citizen exchanges
Jammerbugt	D	0,11 FTE	Official meetings, study trips

Table 4.2: Overview of time reserved for town twinning officers and their tasks, per case.

4.2.3. Town twinning associations

Twinning associations can be found in both Dutch cases. No such associations existed in the Danish cases. Such twinning associations have been founded to support specific twinning relationships. Thus, in Leiden, there are two associations for their European twin

towns: Association Leiden - Torun and the Association Leiden - Oxford.¹⁰² In 's-Hertogenbosch, there are the Association Den Bosch - Trier and the Association Den Bosch - Leuven¹⁰³. These associations are run by citizens, on a voluntary basis. In general, they play a crucial part in the initiation of activities. In 's-Hertogenbosch, the associations are the primary actors when it comes to the initiation of activities: „they are the ones who make and keep contact with other associations and organisations for the organisation and initiation of exchanges”. Their job is to encourage organisations to go on an exchange and apply for municipal funding. This also entails that there is a responsibility for the associations to make sure that the available budget is used. In Leiden the situation is similar, but not identical, as the twinning officer is more dominant in the initiation of activities.

4.2.4 Citizens

In two out of four cases, it was the result of citizens' initiatives that got Leiden and Jammerbugt engaged in town twinning affairs. In 's-Hertogenbosch it was the initiative of the municipality to support European collaboration after WWII. The same can be said for Gladsaxe, with the exception that, in that time, the mayor was very proactive in town twinning. Today, both Gladsaxe and Jammerbugt interviewees state that there is a bottom-up mechanism, whereas interviewee A of Leiden states the degree of bottom-up forces is decreasing. A explains: „it is much more a group of people that is enthusiastic, and this has been the case for some years, in their own groups of about some hundred people per twin town.” Contrastingly, in 's-Hertogenbosch it is a top-down mechanism, because associations are stimulated to initiate activities on behalf of the municipality.

¹⁰² Stichting Stedenband Leiden - Oxford and Stichting Stedenband Leiden - Torun

¹⁰³ Comité Leuven - 's-Hertogenbosch and Comité Trier - 's-Hertogenbosch

4.3 Municipal view on town twinning and aims

4.3.1 's-Hertogenbosch

Interviewee B of municipality 's-Hertogenbosch illustrates that town twinning partnerships are upheld because the city council values, as a consequence of exchanges, the friendships that have been established over the years. Here, town twinning is not embodied into any specific policy. It is located in the municipality's funding schemes, as there is specific funding for town twinning activities. Interviewee B explains:

For us, it is not that profound, [...] to us they are historical partnerships, friendships, that we wish to honour. [...] It has not been strategically or politically established. It is much more something that has come to exist in the past, and we wish to maintain it, because it is just a lot of fun. [...] I do understand that it is desirable if there is an added value to the partnerships, but in general that is not the way it works. Town twinning is purely about exchanging knowledge between officials and keeping the friendships between citizens warm, so people will come to us and we will go to them.

[...]

Even if public support ceases to exist, I can imagine that we will still maintain our town twinnings, but then purely managerial, making it symbolic. But the official notification of our wish to terminate the partnership, and also having to notify Leuven and Trier's administrations, that will not happen. That is not very diplomatic either. [...] I expect it to be this way in future years. There is not any reason to think it will be any different.

[...]

[Terminating such partnerships] is harmful for the mutual relationship. For our administration this is not desirable. Mayors have known each other for years. Maybe

it is a farce, but it is also a relationship that you have with each other. [...] It is also slightly typical for the Brabant region; we are very friendly, in the Limburg region this is similar, the friendliness. I don't think that will change. We aren't pragmatic enough for that, I believe, for saying: there is nothing left to gain, so let's quit. The symbolic value is of significance to us.

There are no desired effects for the activities, other than, as interviewee B states: „we hope it has been fun”.

4.3.2 Leiden

In Leiden, on the other hand, the situation is coloured by the effects of the current financial crisis. Interviewee A describes the following internal criticism towards their city's town twinning practise:

Within the local administration people have needed to take on more tasks, while at the same time we have had to cut costs. Then we frequently hear, and this is still relevant: is town twinning a priority, a core business for our municipality? On a political level, opinions are divided. However, in general, it does come down to the fact that people say there should be a significant interest for us, otherwise we, as the city council, wonder whether we should continue such a partnership.

Repeatedly during our interview, interviewee A expressed that the situation has come to be this way as a result of budgetary cuts and the efficiency measures the municipality has had to deal with. In Leiden the municipality increasingly emphasises there be economical interests:

You can notice a shift: at first, the request and support from the city's inhabitants defined the importance of town twinning, but increasingly it is about the various parties, and these are parties such as business organisations, the university, museums,

cultural institutions, a foundation. [...] It is increasingly problematic that our capacity, both in staff and financially, is reducing.”

[...]

Municipalities receive less income from the national government and they are required to function in a ,lean and mean’ way and consequently, things like town twinning are not viewed as core business. Unless you are able to justify it. I would like to stress that it is not the case for 2013, but I do notice such a tendency, not just in Leiden, but it is also an issue for other municipalities. [...] If there were thousands of citizens that are active and would lobby politically by speaking at council meetings to get parties on their side, it would have been different.

She expects it to be a growing tendency that much of international collaboration is done outside town twinning in short term partnerships. An illustration with regard to the maintenance of Oxford versus the discontinuation of Krefeld:

Our partnership with Oxford is important, because Oxford is an important partner with regard to both our universities. [...] But Krefeld on the other hand, there being no exchanges with citizens or organisations anymore, we may wonder why we still have this relationship. Consequently, we decided to end our partnership, and our mayor travelled to Krefeld to notify them of our choice. However, [...] Krefeld does not want it to end. [...] Their attitude is: a friendship is for life. Whether there is little going on, whether it is interesting content-wise, you are not going to end it.

[...]

I believe, and I don’t wish to generalise, but I think the Netherlands is much more business-minded and does not value tradition, symbolism and representation as much. [...] Having a friendship for 67 years, that is not something that you cast doubt upon; that is just so valuable, and ceremonial activities are a part of that. [...]

We always try to make [trips] more interesting, to put other activities on the programme [next to ceremonial ones].

4.3.3 Jammerbugt

Town twinning in Jammerbugt municipality, is similar to that in 's-Hertogenbosch, but town twinning officer D expresses thoughts for the improvement of town twinning comparable to the efficiency reform of Leiden. However, no action is taken in this regard, because of the way the political body values the town twinning partnerships; interviewee D illustrates: „I think before it was more positive and more important. Now it is only just a tiny little bit of what we are doing. And just a tiny little bit of money. They think: why not?“ Interviewee D believes that there are ways to make it more profitable both for the municipality and for the citizens, but that would require a renewal of aims. „It takes a lot of time and effort from the municipality. We don't have that time and effort now“, interviewee D states about such a reform. As town twinning is not a priority for the municipality, no more time is reserved for this.

If it has to be something bigger, we have to re-think it. To be maybe more project oriented, so you don't have these friends, or we can have the friends, okay that is just fine, but if we want to do something professional, then we have to find the relevant partners for that. Not only just our [twin towns]. [...] I think it would be more useful if we had some kind of project we wanted, [...] then we could search at the EU or just on the internet and find somebody who is very good at doing - whatever it may be - and then make a connection to them and make a project together. That is relevant, I think.

Officer D states: „I think [town twinning] is a bit out of fashion. [...] I think the mayor and the politicians, they like it as a concept.“ Interviewee D also claims that much of personal contact and exchange is self-sufficient in today's society, as for example much international contact can be made through the internet and is not limited to the exchanges through town twinning. However, for the elderly town twinning can offer international

experience that they might not be able to do otherwise. Town twinning is also considered a cheap and easy way for staff members to go on study trips, but this has not been used in recent years:

For the last six years here, we have had this very big reform, with all the municipalities in Denmark from 374 to only 98. So we have been using these last years to find out, how do we do this, and to get everything all right. So I think it was more before, but maybe it will come again now we have some more space to do something. [...] We are a small community and it is in the countryside, maybe that also has something to do with it, because the big cities in Denmark, they do a lot about international activity.

At the same time, the motivation for the continuation is the value of friendship:

I think the motivation is to do something good for the citizens. To give them an opportunity to visit other countries and to do what they do together; dancing, or whatever. And then I think it is tradition - at the political level it is tradition and it's friendship. The personal relations, I think they are very important. [...] I think it is very difficult to say no to good old friends. And I really believe that the associations, our folk dancers and so on, they benefit from it, I am sure.

Interviewee D even mentions that she believes regardless of there being activities, whether the partnerships remain active or become purely symbolical, she thinks they will be maintained.

4.3.4 Gladsaxe

Town twinning in Gladsaxe, Denmark, is organised similarly to 's-Hertogenbosch. The similarity can be found in the way they treat activities: for the municipality it is most desirable if there are as many exchanges as possible. A central aim that can be connected to Gladsaxe's town twinning activities is that of personal development. Interviewee C states:

A successful activity is one with personal contact. It is easy to go to Paris and London and see the Eiffel Tower, or something, but it is not easy to get personal contact. That is what the twin towns can do. [...] It is not because of business, here, for the municipality. It could be, but it is not. Business is not involved in our twin town work at all. They don't sponsor anything, we don't use it. Sometimes our twin towns think that they can strengthen their business contacts, but it always ends out that they are not really interested.

[...]

I also think that, the citizens who grew up here, they have all had experiences in twin towns. And that is the one they talk about. Because the schools use the twin towns a lot. And when people grown old, that is what they remember, the trip to whatever. Because they are different, because of the personal contact. Because of the long lasting contacts. So they stick deeper, than if you just go to an unknown city and hire a guide. And I think in general, the citizens, they feel responsible for showing the best of Gladsaxe, when they show around here. They end up being proud of what we have. [...] I think in general, the citizens, they feel responsible for showing the best of Gladsaxe, when they show around here. They end up proud of what we have. [...] It helps us to have a ,we' feeling. [...] I - We Gladsaxe - We Denmark.”

Interviewee C mentions the element of making the municipality an attractive workplace:

For the employees it is a good opportunity for personal development in a time in which the municipality doesn't have that much money for courses, education, etc. So here we try to make it attractive to work here; [...] we are not that well paid, compared to the private system. But we try to find the values, the things that are good here. So you can have personal development by making study trips like that. And actually we also really believe that there is a big value in it.

Cohesion and personal development is achieved by means of exchange. Another way of incorporating the entire municipality into the town twinning affairs, is the yearly cultural event that takes place in Gladsaxe. Interviewee C illustrates:

It is also our responsibility to make arrangements for citizens who are not in associations. We make exhibitions, or theatre, cultural weeks, every year we have a big cultural event here. And we always invite one of the twin towns to do something. [...] This is a way to keep it alive, it is for the whole municipality.

4.4 Criteria for funding

4.4.1 's-Hertogenbosch

The funding scheme of 's-Hertogenbosch municipality is directed at citizens organisations. Private persons are not eligible for grants. The visits to and hosting of groups should contribute to the knowledge exchange about the specific cities; to the meeting of inhabitants of the particular city; or enhancing friendship between the cities. According to interviewee B the objectives are low, but realistic. B states: „In the bottom-line, as long as there are sufficient exchanges and activities, we and the city council are satisfied.”

4.4.2 Leiden

The criteria employed by interviewee A for an acceptable activity are: an interest for Leiden and the element of tradition. The interest of Leiden is defined by City Wide Approach: (1) broad public support from various parties (citizens and organisations) within the city; (2) an initiative from outside of the administration which the municipality can facilitate; (3) in accordance with vision ‚Leiden city of knowledge and culture’. Some of the recurring activities are sport exchanges, which are also considered traditional exchanges. However, at the same time there exists a wish for a deepening of objectives:

We prefer to see that the exchange has been fashioned in such a way that there is more content to it. [...] We would rather support that, if it had an interesting component with regard to content. For example, we would value the element of culture over the mere exchange of sport teams. Naturally, sport can be an exchange, but it is limited in my view. The advantage is that the teams largely organise the events themselves.

4.4.3 Jammerbugt

With regard to the criteria for the activities, there are few rules: „there needs to be a relation, they have to do something together, have the same interests, and be a group.”

Interviewee D checks the applications and approves them together with the mayor. It can be said that one special feature to the funding scheme of Jammerbugt town twinning is the fact that citizens are supported to go anywhere as long as there is intercultural activity:

„[You] can get the money also when they are going somewhere else. It doesn't have to be our twinning towns. Because we find that the intercultural relations are the most important. It is not important that it is exactly our towns.”

4.4.4 Gladsaxe

Interviewee C explains that none of the applications are rejected, because the criteria are based on personal contact, a common relation and a minimum of four people and two nights spent in the twin town. Interviewee C clarifies:

As long as there is an exchange, we don't reject any. We don't check, we don't control, we don't spend time on that. We can't decide what is a right and wrong association, right or wrong thought. So if they are interested in something extreme, that I don't support, I can't help it.

Citizens may apply for funding at Gladsaxe municipality, both when they are going abroad and when they are hosting. Previously, funding was aimed at people under the age of twenty-five, however, that is no longer the case.

4.5 Municipal budget

In each of the municipalities there was a municipal budget that had been reserved for town twinning. Table 4.4 shows the available amounts for 2013 (exclusive of FTE) and reveals whether other sources are used to finance town twinning activities.

Funding sources	Leiden	's-Hertogenbosch	Gladsaxe	Jammerbugt
Municipal budget (total amount)	€ 25.000	€ 34.000	DK 1.000.000	DK 100.000
Other sources	e.g. Fonds 1818, Novib	No	No	No
Europe for Citizens Programme	No	No	No	No

Table 4.4: Financial situation for town twinning in 2013 for municipalities Leiden¹⁰⁴, 's-Hertogenbosch, Gladsaxe, Jammerbugt.

As can be noted from Table 4.4 the total amounts available for town twinning on behalf of the municipalities vary between the different local administrations. In both Dutch cases, the total amount is split among the twin towns. This entails that in 's-Hertogenbosch, €17.000 euro is available for both Trier and Leuven. The total amount in Leiden is also inclusive of their partnerships outside of Europe. For both Oxford and Torun €3000 is available. Gladsaxe and Jammerbugt, on the other hand, do not have a division per country. In Jammerbugt the simple rule of first come, first served, applies. Interviewee C from Gladsaxe municipality explains:

We have the amount of money, and we divide it into four [...]. One for official activities. One for others. And most of it is divided into two for travelling activities,

¹⁰⁴ One element that has not been incorporated into the table is the fact that Leiden is a part of a European project that is supported through another EU programme. This project is called HealthTIES and deals with medical technologies. Leiden became a part of this project through their university and the university of Oxford, which was facilitated by the fact that both cities were twin towns.

for the citizens and host activities. But if we end up using more, we can just swap them over. We have a full amount, we can do what we want [...]. And some of the years we know that we need a lot for official meetings, so we go a little bit down on others, never on the money for the citizens. Then it's the employees study tours which go down.

The municipal budget in 's-Hertogenbosch is primarily meant for citizen exchanges. Whenever there are official meetings in which the mayor or other political figures are involved, this is financed from 'administrative representation expenses'. Interviewee B stated that these amounts were negligible. Funding is regulated per journey. If citizens wish to travel to Leuven or Trier, they can get €40 per person, maximised to €1900 per application. Then, in the case of hosting, they can get €25 per person. Funding is granted in consultation with the associations. After the exchange, it is required to deliver a report and justify the costs. There are no specific requirements for the report.

In Gladsaxe, visits to the other twin town are funded up to fifty percent of the travel costs. For the hosting guests, on the other hand, the citizens will get a certain amount per guest. Interviewee C and colleague are a decisive factor in this matter. When the money is received there are no rules with regard to the spending, however, when going abroad the finances need to be justified afterwards. Afterwards, it is required to write a report on the activity to be placed on the municipality's website. For this report there are no specific rules. Official meetings are paid entirely by the municipality and the traveling of employees, if they go through the town twinning office is also funded up to a maximum of fifty percent.

Jammerbugt municipality finances the entire town twinning business (municipal activities and citizen activities) by means of the DK 100.000. Interviewee D explains that citizen associations and groups that apply for grants get between DK 5000 and DK 10.000, she states: „I think the associations get maybe DK 50.000 to DK 70.000, and the rest is used for us going abroad or somebody coming here.” Jammerbugt Kommune does not promote the town twinning funding opportunities much, because there is not much that can be

provided. „If we promote it too much, we get too many applications”, interviewee D explains. At the same time, however: „I think if a lot of people came to us and applied for money, and if I went to the mayor and politicians and said: oh, we have this very big need for this, then they would [...] get some more money to it. I am sure.”

Finally, in Leiden, the €3000 that were reserved for Torun and Oxford, are transferred to the twinning associations in support of their own costs and the funding of projects. There is €7000 of the total municipal budget left for our interviewee to spend on town twinning activities as she sees fit.

The Europe for Citizens Programme is not utilised in any of our cases. Leiden and Gladsaxe explained that the application for funding is too much work and not worth the effort. Moreover, the municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch was not even aware of the funding opportunities until it was addressed to B recently. In Jammerbugt municipality it is simply not used, because there is no need. In Leiden and 's-Hertogenbosch, applications for EU funding is not something that is done by the associations either.

4.6 Activities

Within town twinning practise, there are two groups that initiate activities: the municipality and citizens/organisations. We may distinguish between five types of twinning activities: (1) official activities; this is when mayors or political personnel in the municipality take part in representative activities, (2) officers trips; this is when the municipality staff engage in study trips, (3) citizens activities; these are exchanges between citizens or citizens associations from twin towns, (4) organisational activities; this is when organisations, important partners within a municipality, or business take part in activities, (5) other activities; this is where we included the numbers for exchanges with schools. For the year 2012, the number of activities per case, per initiator (municipality or citizens) is presented in Table 4.4, which is limited to exchanges directly between European twin towns and excludes exchanges outside of the town twinning network.

Name of Municipality	Country	Municipality's initiative						Citizens' initiative					
		1	2	3	4	5	total	1	2	3	4	5	total
Leiden	Netherlands	2	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	10	0	0	10
's-Hertogenbosch	Netherlands	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	17	0	0	17
Gladsaxe	Denmark	3	6	3	0	1	12	0	0	20	0	2	22
Jammerbugt	Denmark	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2

Table 4.4: Number of town twinning activities for the year 2012 initiated by two Dutch municipalities and two Danish municipalities with their European twin towns, organised per initiator.

In 2012, on behalf of Gladsaxe kommune, six staff activities inside of the European region have taken place, of which three were outside of twinning partnerships (thus, those three have not been counted in the twelve municipality initiated activities). Such knowledge exchange, that is an active part of Gladsaxe's town twinning, is not initiated by our Dutch cases.

Taking a look at the individual numbers for our cases per town they are twinned with, we can notice that the proximity of twinned countries appears to be of relevance when it comes to citizen exchanges. In Leiden, eight activities with Oxford, compared to five with Torun; In 's-Hertogenbosch, fourteen with Leuven, compared to three with Trier; In Gladsaxe all three German twin towns were visited five times or more, second came their Dutch twin town Apeldoorn (also five exchanges), and others only once or twice. Interviewee B for municipality 's-Hertogenbosch explains the difference for her town as a result of distance, you are able visit Leuven just for one day, whereas going to Trier will require you to spend the night, which is more costly. Gladsaxe's town twinning officer C clarifies the tendency for Germany in a similar manner: „it is close by and the German language is not too distant either”. However, at the same time, it is said that Britain is also a popular destination, but hesitant in hosting them. Interviewee C clarifies that this is due to a lack of available time. In Leiden, however, interviewee A explains it in a different manner by adding the issue of interest through the university. In the case of Jammerbugt,

travel costs are mentioned as a determinant factor in activities. The most popular destination for twinning activities in 2012 was Sweden.

Much of the citizen exchanges are centred around sports and culture exchanges. Many sports events take place between most of our case studies (all except Jammerbugt) and their twin towns each year (54%). With regard to cultural exchanges there are for example scouts, choirs, and dance groups that travel between the twin towns (46%). Through cultural and sports exchanges a broad target group with many different ages is reached. Groups frequently apply for funding more than once.

4.7 European identity

All interviewees were asked what they thought about the fact that the EU views town twinning as an indicator for European identity. All of their answers pointed in the direction of European citizenship being important before, when town twinning partnerships were established after WWII and the fall of the Iron Curtain, but not as relevant anymore. This can be illustrated by the following statement by A, interviewee for Leiden municipality; on European citizenship she states:

In the past it was very important, especially in the time of the Cold War. That is when our relationship with Torun was established, that was when the Iron Curtain was still there. People went to Torun not without risks; from Leiden in a bus with supplies to aid the people there that were having difficulties. [...] It was from the peace movement that our partnership with Torun was established. In those times, it was essential for European countries to cooperate, because Europe was divided and they saw each other as enemies. Back then, that was crucial. However, now, Poland is in the EU. We have many contacts in Poland by now. The feeling for European citizenship has already been achieved by this. Whether you can strengthen this by exchanging every once in a while with a city in Poland, is the question. I think to a lesser extent. It does play a part, but - it is true that the European Union aims towards that, but to what extent we, as a municipality should propagate this, and whether this

is one of our main tasks... [...] If you look at the importance for cooperation within Europe, then town twinning is not always a part of that. Our actions within Europe as the municipality of Leiden, for the larger part, happen outside of town twinning.

Interviewee of 's-Hertogenbosch, confirms the image of past necessity for European unity. Their relationship with Trier was established during the Cold War. Today, European identity is not part of one of their aims. Interviewee B states that she does understand the EU's position, but believes that this is not something that she notices in reality:

To me it seems rather utopian, saying contributes to the feeling 'I am a European citizen'. Here in 's-Hertogenbosch, you are a Bosschenaar in the first place, and secondly you are Dutch and that is where it ends. For us it is Leuven and Trier, but I don't believe there are many people who feel this has anything to do with Europe.

In Denmark, a similar image exists. Interviewee C states that during the establishment of the first twin cities, Gladsaxe's mayor was very European Community oriented and wished Denmark to become a member of the EC. During that time, there was much personal risk involved and much enthusiasm for closer ties between cities from different nations. Currently, there is no focus on European identity in town twinning affairs. As interviewee C states: „we rather focus on the different nationalities' identities.” Moreover, in Jammerbugt, interviewee D explains that instead of a European identity, there exists a Nordic identity. The EU does not play any role in the initiation of projects. Interviewee D believes that the EU's aims are not realistic. „In many other respects the EU is important to us, but not in the aspect of [town twinning].”

5. Discussion

In this chapter we will offer discussion of our main findings and relate them to the theories discussed in an earlier stage of this study. The aim of this research was to explore the characteristics of town twinning in four municipalities: Leiden and 's-Hertogenbosch of the Netherlands and Gladsaxe and Jammerbugt of Denmark. Furthermore, we wished to attempt to explain possible differences by means of governance structures, and either contest or approve our posed hypotheses. Lastly, we have investigated the significance of the European Union in the town twinning practise of our four cases. After the discussion of the results, we will close this chapter with suggestions for future research.

As can be seen from the results, there are similarities but also many differences that exist between the four municipalities. These differences exist within the execution of town twinning, but also in the way it is organised within the municipality. The results have given rise to the following conclusions, which will be discussed in succession.

- (1) It has become clear from our interviews that the continuation of town twinning is safeguarded by the municipality as an institution, but primary actors differ between both countries. These differences involve (a) the role of the mayor and council, (b) town twinning associations, and (c) the role of town twinning officers.
- (2) Evaluation of town twinning activities is poor (a), and (b) criteria to assess twin town projects are lacking to a large extent.
- (3) Municipal budget is main instrument for implementation of town twinning.
- (4) In none of our cases European citizenship is of importance in the practise of town twinning.
- (5) In all four cases, official and citizen meetings are key activities, in which tradition is an important element.
- (6) In the destinations of town twinning exchanges proximity is of importance.
- (7) Town twinning is co-dependent on top-down and bottom-up forces.

1a) Different role of mayor and city council

We learnt that in Gemeente Leiden and 's-Hertogenbosch, the city council is decisive in the implementation of town twinning, because they are the head of the local government.¹⁰⁵ It becomes clear from both interviews that, as long as the city council remains convinced of the value of town twinning, the relationships are upheld. In Denmark, on the other hand, the mayor evidently plays an important role, while the council only has a marginal role, as both officers claim the mayor decides the continuation of the partnerships. The importance of the role of the mayor has previously been described by Larsen and Goldsmith,¹⁰⁶ and we may conclude that this is also the case for town twinning. This difference proves that our second hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

1b) Presence or absence of town twinning associations

The most striking difference between the way town twinning is structured in the towns in the Netherlands and Denmark, is the fact that in the Dutch cases town twinning associations can also be defined as key actors, whereas the Danish cases do not have such associations. The associations play a major part in the promotion and initiation of twinning activities and they have responsibilities with regard to the budget. As such, this implies that the associations are a determinant factor in the implementation of town twinning. With regard to budget and activities, we have established that the Danish mayor has a similar role to that of the twinning associations in the Dutch cases. Thus, Leiden and 's-Hertogenbosch have involved an additional actor in the implementation process, while the Danish cases have not. This difference can also be attributed to governance structures (H2).

¹⁰⁵ Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten (Association of Dutch Municipalities). "Local Government in the Netherlands." edited by E. Figee. Den Haag, 2008.

¹⁰⁶ Larsen, H., Goldsmith, M. "Local Political Leadership: Nordic Style." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28, no. 1 (March 2004): 121-33.

1c) The independence of town twinning officers

As both Danish mayors are influential in town twinning practise, their positions and the work of town twinning officers in Gladsaxe and Jammerbugt are closely connected. It has also become apparent that both mayors are involved in the granting of funds (in Jammerbugt even more so than in Gladsaxe). Furthermore, they are also decisive with regard to some of the activities; it is for example the mayor's initiative to allow study trips for the municipal staff. The officers in Leiden and 's-Hertogenbosch, on the other hand, manage the granting of funds more independently.

The town twinning officers' jobs are directly influenced by the decisions of the political body. Decisions are being made for them, while they have an executive position. Thus, the town twinning officers that we have interviewed can be seen as mediators between the council/mayor (primary actor) and the activities. This also implies that their views on the matter can also be placed in this intermediate position, not fully reflecting the opinion of the primary actors, nor the opinion of citizens.

2a) Low aims for town twinning

The majority of our cases have low aims, as the value is sought on a personal level, instead of a political and professional level. Leiden is the exception, as they seek to make the activities profitable on multiple levels.

Literature has described that town twinning is frequently a cultural phenomenon only, whereas other forms of international collaboration touch upon topics of economics and politics.¹⁰⁷ The news article in *Binnenlands Bestuur* has described that this is a reason why several Dutch municipalities have terminated their partnerships,¹⁰⁸ a tendency that may also be noticed at the municipality of Leiden. Cultural exchange is not considered to be

¹⁰⁷ Ercole, E., Walters, M. & Goldsmith, M. "Cities, Networks, Euregions, European Offices." In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by Klausen, K.K. and Goldsmith, M.. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997.

¹⁰⁸ Rijken, K. "Stedenbanden Dupe Van Crisis, Behalve Als Ze Handel Opleveren." *Binnenlands Bestuur*, 16 August 2013.

profitable enough, as there is other international activity that is much more profitable. This view is confirmed by the municipality of Jammerbugt, however their lack of priority has not resulted in any action in this respect. In Jammerbugt, town twinning is considered as something that is 'nice' for the citizens, but is not a priority for the municipality. One may wonder then, why are municipalities in the Netherlands terminating relationships to embark on new activities, when citizens may still benefit from it on a personal level? We may learn from our interview with Leiden, that financial resources is a reason. This correlates with Goldsmith's findings that Dutch municipalities' revenue mainly depends on the national government, and this is why they do not have so much financial freedom (H1).¹⁰⁹ Thus, in Denmark, municipalities have more financial space to maintain twinings regardless of in-depth aims or political foundations (H1). There exists a difference, however, between our Dutch cases: Leiden confirms the image created in Dutch news papers and the effects of budgetary difficulties, whereas 's-Hertogenbosch municipality explained they maintain the partnerships, regardless of their financial situation. We are nonetheless able to approve our first hypothesis, because this difference can be explained by regionalism, an aspect of influence to Dutch governance signalled by Rokkan and Urwin.¹¹⁰ Interviewee B ascribes their value for tradition, friendship and symbolism to the Brabant region¹¹¹ and for them, that is enough reason to maintain both twin towns. This is an interesting result, because regionalism as a determinant factor for decision-making might not be evident for everyone in the Netherlands, as Leiden contrastingly stated that Dutch people in general are more professionally oriented and do not value traditions as much as others.

Out of the three cases which aims for town twinning are centred around personal development, Gladsaxe is an interesting case, because we signalled the element of cohesion as a feature of their objectives. Through town twinning activities, they wish to achieve that citizens feel proud of who they are as citizens of Gladsaxe, but also the

¹⁰⁹ Goldsmith, M. . "Central Control over Local Government - a Western European Comparison." *Local Government Studies* 28, no. 3 (2002): 93.

¹¹⁰ Rokkan, S., Urwin, D. W. *The Politics of Territorial Identity: Studies in European Regionalism*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 1982.

¹¹¹ Brabant is the province 's-Hertogenbosch is located in.

officers with regard to their affiliations with the municipal workplace. The theory that international exchanges enhances social cohesion was previously recorded by Falkenhain et al., however this has been associated with European identity.¹¹² This entails that no supranational affiliations are created, but rather affiliations with the regional or national level. This may leave us wondering to what extent their local identity is enhanced and whether the one excludes the other. Our results are not inclusive of such material.

2b) Lack of criteria

The low objectives that we have observed, with the exception of Leiden, are also reflected in the lack of criteria that are employed in the case of Gladsaxe, Jammerbugt, and 's-Hertogenbosch. The criteria vary, differing from size of the group and duration of the stay, but overall, the only requirement with regard to content is the fact that there needs to be a mutual relationship with the party in the other town. Other than that, town twinning is employed mainly for pleasure. From our interview with Gladsaxe, it can be concluded that they do wish to enhance social cohesion within the municipality, however, this is not evaluated upon. The people partaking in the activities are merely to write a report, but there are no requirements for this either. The same counts for 's-Hertogenbosch and Jammerbugt, however, in Jammerbugt the report is not even a compulsory element. In neither of these three cases there is an evaluation investigating the added value of the activities. The lack of evaluation is striking, as it would be expected that with the implementation of policies and programmes, in any government institution, would require an evaluation procedure. It appears that town twinning has become purely habitual.

There exists an entirely different image in Leiden, because their criteria revolve around City Wide Approach, projects with multi-layered public support that can be facilitated, but not organised, by the municipality, and which fit the city's profile. However, this approach is adopted for recent and future projects, but the earlier established projects are accepted on grounds of tradition, which lack assessment as discussed above.

¹¹² Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 230.

3) *Municipal budget*

It becomes apparent from all of our interviews, regardless of the amount available for twinning, that the budget is the main instrument in the execution of the activities. The importance of financial resources for town twinning activities was previously uncovered by A People's Europe Committee, as well as Furmankiewicz.¹¹³ The size of the budget is affected by the autonomy of the state, this was observed most clearly in the cases of Leiden and Gladsaxe. As a result of budgetary cuts from the national government, Leiden has had to cut back on their town twinning budget and amount of FTE (H1). Leiden has the smallest budget reserved for town twinning, compared to the other cases. This proves that the issue of autonomy is affecting the practise of town twinning, therefore partially approving our first hypothesis. Gladsaxe, spends the most on town twinning with 2,2 FTE and budget of a million Danish kronor. This can partially be explained by the many twin towns they have, but also as a result of the autonomy of the Danish local authorities (H1). The exceptions to H1 are 's-Hertogenbosch and Jammerbugt; their budget are not directly reflective of autonomy issues. 's-Hertogenbosch's budget features the highest amount per twin town. This may be a result of the little time our interviewee spends on town twinning affairs. Moreover, twin towns are of symbolic value to 's-Hertogenbosch, which has been previously determined as a result of regionalism. Jammerbugt's budget does not directly reflect of autonomy either, as they only have a small budget. However, the determinant factor in Jammerbugt's budget is the lack of priority attached to town twinning. Moreover, according to our interviewee the amount is sufficient.

4) *European citizenship not considered important*

All interviewees mentioned that European citizenship was of no importance for the promotion, continuation or evaluation of town twinning. As a matter of fact, our interviewees even claimed that the notion of town twinning contributing to European

¹¹³ Adonnino, P. "A People's Europe, Report from the Ad Hoc Committee." In *Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 7/85*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1985. &

Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 145-62.

integration, as propagated by the EU, is not realistic. As such, this is another aspect that is not evaluated upon. This contrasts with Großpietsch's study, which supported the notion that through town twinning a European awareness and solidarity can be enhanced.¹¹⁴ In Gladsaxe and 's-Hertogenbosch they rather focus on the nationality and history of the twin town, instead of being European. Furthermore, Leiden and Jammerbugt in particular were of the opinion that town twinning is not considered the doorway to the European field. Therefore, it proves doubtful to use the number of town twinings as an evaluation tool to demonstrate (the level of) European integration, such as the EU Commission assumes.¹¹⁵ We may find confirmation to this view in the work of Ercole et al. that the influence of the EU is much more noticeable in other forms of international cooperation and networking.¹¹⁶ Interestingly, the internal twinning networks that both Danish *kommuner* have are not utilised to apply for European funding either, even though the EU is highly favourable of such networks.¹¹⁷ Such networks are, in our view, part of the town twinning practise for the Danish cases primarily because of efficiency reasons, as the official and representative meetings occur simultaneously.

5) *Key activities and tradition*

So far, we have discussed the internal structure of town twinning within the municipality and how this has been shaped and why. Our results also discover what town twinning entails in practise. The variation between activities for our cases cannot be explained as a result of governance structures. This is because the activities also involve the twin cities in other countries, and thus are not only affected by Dutch and Danish structures, but also by the structures of the partner cities. We may conclude that there are various types of activities, however two types are recurrent in all four cases: official meetings and citizens meetings. In both categories, the meetings do not only comprise of the going to partner

¹¹⁴ Großpietsch, J. "The Changing Geographies of International Municipal Relations in Europe – a Study of British-German Town Twinning Partnerships." Loughborough University, 2010: 299.

¹¹⁵ European Commission. "Annual Activity Report 2011." edited by DG Communication, 1-34, 2012.

¹¹⁶ Ercole, E., Walters, M. & Goldsmith, M. "Cities, Networks, Euregions, European Offices." In *European Integration and Local Government*, edited by Klausen, K.K. and Goldsmith, M.. Cheltenham, UK, and Brookfield, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997.

¹¹⁷ European Commission. "Annual Activity Report 2011." edited by DG Communication, 1-34, 2012.

towns, but also the hosting of parties from the other towns, which Jayne et al. have claimed to be key aspects of town twinning.¹¹⁸ Official meetings are initiated by the municipality and they revolve around tradition and anniversaries of the partnerships, as a confirmation of the friendship. These activities are what Voin referred to as activities aimed at enhancing brotherhood and solidarity between nation states,¹¹⁹ as most of the activities are as old as the partnerships. As such, this involves the participation of mayors and other municipal officers. The element of tradition could also be found in citizen activities: sports and cultural projects. Groups and associations frequently use funding more than once. Furthermore, many different groups of citizens, in various age groups are reached.

6) *The role of proximity*

With regard to the destinations of exchanges, it can be said that the role of proximity is of importance. Proximity is both related to distance and culture. Proximity in distance is frequently fuelled by the amount of travel costs. The distance between Denmark and Germany contributes to Germany's popularity in Gladsaxe, as well as the similarity between languages. Nordic destinations are not by definition preferred, however that is the case in Jammerbugt, as a result of the cultural vicinity. Travel costs are also of influence on the frequency of activities between 's-Hertogenbosch and Leuven. Leiden's more frequent cooperation with Oxford is both affected by travel costs, as well as mutual interest in each other's university. The role of proximity in town twinning practise has been demonstrated by Falkenhain et al., however, this analysis was conducted on the basis of partnership frequencies across Europe.¹²⁰ Our investigation contributes to this by demonstrating it is also a determinant factor in the initiation of activities, and the intensity of the partnership. The intensity of neighbouring or regional twin towns was also discovered in a research

¹¹⁸Jayne, M., Hubbard, P, Bell, D. "Worlding a City: Twinning and Urban Theory." *City: Analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action* 15, no. 1 (2011): 31-32.

¹¹⁹ Voin, A. "Europe from the Bottom Up: Town Twinning in France During the Cold War." *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 4 (2002): 128,130.

¹²⁰ Falkenhain, M., Hoelscher, M. and Ruser, A. "Twinning Peaks - Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space." *Journal of Civil Society* 8, no. 3 (September 2012): 235.

conducted with Polish municipalities.¹²¹ As such, we may theorise that proximity could determine the success of a twinning relationship.

7) *Top-down and bottom-up forces*

According to all four municipalities, the enthusiasm of citizens is of major importance to the continuation of town twinning. The interviewees state that the partnerships persist as a result of bottom-up forces. As such, the citizens can be said to be another influential actor. We dare to argue, however, that the citizens' support is directly connected to municipal engagement. To illustrate, there is the element of promotion and encouragement that either exist or does not exist in the municipalities: Jammerbugt does not promote actively, otherwise they will have too many activities; Gladsaxe actively promotes twinning to get as many citizens involved as possible; Leiden encourages the twinning organisations to persist in town twinning affairs by providing them with annual grants; 's-Hertogenbosch encourages the town twinning associations to get as many exchanges as possible. As such, it is a municipal force that is noticeable when it comes to citizen activities, which has an effect on citizen participation. Regardless of our interviewees' opinions, it can be concluded from their statements, that town twinning is co-dependent on top-down and bottom-up forces. It becomes apparent that the former cannot function without the latter. Both political and citizen forces keep town twinning going. It could be said that both actors influence each other: the opinion of the administration affects the opinion of the citizens, and the reverse is also true. Ultimately, it is the question of who is cueing whom, as Steenbergen et al. have described. The results from our interviews, in which the actions within the administration clearly affect citizen behaviours, are conforming Steenbergen et al.'s observations that politicians influence the behaviour of the people.¹²²

¹²¹ Furmankiewicz, M. "Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People - the Example of Poland." *Belgeo* 1, no. 2 (2005): 155.

¹²² Steenbergen, M. R., Edwards, E. E., de Vries, C. E. "Who's Cueing Whom?: Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration." *European Union Politics* 8 (2007): 14, 29-30.

5.1 Critical evaluation of current approach and suggestions for future research

As our research has primarily focused on the view from town twinning officers, and we have not questioned any citizens, city council members, mayor, or twinning associations, we may only assume the interviewees answers to be a version of reality. It is only the perspective of the civil servant that we have analysed here, therefore, it could be said that the scope of this research is limited, as the full picture of town twinning cannot be drawn. It could be that the aims or the evaluation of town twinning is considered differently, when speaking with a member of the council or the mayor. The relationships between twinning associations and the municipality is also limited to the perspective of one officer. It could very well be that the city council and mayor value them differently, or that the twinning associations themselves consider their relationship to the municipality to be entirely different. Especially with regard to the issue of European citizenship, it is essential to realise this is merely the view from the officer working in town twinning, and this does not have to be reflective of the actual opinions of the citizens. Moreover, it is likely that the results would also have been different if other municipalities were selected. We must bear in mind that this is also the opinions of only four subjects, and therefore not entirely reliable. The results would also have been more reliable if the sample size had been bigger, with more interviews from each country. Conducting more interviews would have allowed us to draw more generalising conclusions, as we now only have two examples of each nation. However, with regard to the open character of our main research question, we have collected some valuable material and we have been able to suggest the relevance of governance structures to the organisation of town twinning. They do not fully explain the differences, but they are indeed noticeable in the way twinning is organised within the municipality. The degree of autonomy, however, in the Danish system is dangerous to draw conclusions on. Autonomy implies a degree of freedom, however this freedom is not self-explanatory, as choice that comes from freedom could, for example, also be based on rationality. For the Dutch cases there was much clearer evidence with regard to the issue of autonomy, namely that of revenue. Thus, with regard to the Danish cases, we have only made suggestions concerning the relevance of autonomy as an explanation.

Next to the scope of the research, the adopted method for selection of our cases may have limited the research as well. For the current study, we randomly selected our twin towns, with the prerequisite that there needed to be twinning activities. However, as there is a difference that can be noticed in international activity between big cities and smaller ones, it could have been of added value to investigate either larger cities, or smaller municipalities. For example, gemeente Leiden can be considered one of such bigger towns, with multiple strategies for international collaboration, not primarily limited to town twinning. On the other hand, Jammerbugt is a much smaller municipality and does not involve in any international activity outside of town twinning. Therefore, we suggest in future research (a) to recognise different dimensions of town sizes and international activities, and (b) to sample different size classes of towns in sufficient numbers. Beside this, the explorative nature of this research has challenged us to compare between cases that are very different. Nevertheless, current results and conclusions will be useful in developing a quantitative approach with a structured interview protocol and set-up; to which we can apply statistical analysis that will allow classification, comparison, and discussion of town twinning practise more reliably.

6. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that many differences exist in the implementation of town twinning between municipalities. We have determined seven factors that characterise the practise of town twinning in each of our cases: (1) there are multiple actors involved in the continuation of town twinning; (2) the assessment of the value of activities is lacking; (3) a municipal budget serves as a main instrument for the implementation of town twinning; (4) European citizenship is of no importance in the practise of town twinning; (5) the activities that are most essential in town twinning are official meetings and citizen meetings, which have tradition as a common theme; (6) the proximity of twinning partners is of influence on the activities; (7) top-down and bottom-up forces are interconnected.

A possible relation has been revealed between the way town twinning is organised and the respective governance structures of Denmark and the Netherlands. As was expected in H1, the dependency of the Dutch municipalities on financial resources from the national level affects the implementation of town twinning. Furthermore, the anticipated difference between Dutch and Danish local governance with regard to the involvement of the mayor in H2, has also been approved.

There are policy lessons to be learned from this research. Firstly, more insight can be gained on the value of town twinning if municipalities effectively measure the effects of town twinning activities. Currently, this is only done inadequately and most of the activities exist purely on the basis of habit. We propose that such an evaluation should address topics, such as: target audience, municipal aims, citizens' aims, desired effects, and actual effects. If a full picture of the implications of town twinning is obtained, then municipalities will also be able to assess how they wish to go about the 'blanks'. For example, if it appears that primarily young people are involved in town twinning, the municipality can adopt a strategy for incorporating a larger audience. Secondly, there are lessons to be learned for the EU. This research has deep implications with regard to basic fundamentals of EU integration policy. If our current findings are regularities across Europe, this implies that the EU is missing the mark and EU awareness is not at all achieved. More

importantly, European citizenship is not even considered a realistic effect of town twinning exchange. The EU could learn from this that their services should be made more accessible. Funding schemes could benefit from a reform by, for example, making it less of a challenge for towns to engage in twinning networks. If the EU seems accessible to the European towns, they might use it more frequently and also transfer a positive image to the citizens.

Furthermore, the current research contributes to the academic discussion on political actors versus citizens. We have established that there exist a relation between support from the political actors and the citizens: the former affects the latter, but also in reverse order. This means, that even on a local level, in a subject that takes up such a small part of municipal activity, this co-dependence is visible.

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Appendix 1 - Interview questions (Dutch version)

Algemene vragen:

1. Hoeveel stedenbanden heeft de gemeente binnen Europa?
 - Hoe zijn die tot stand gekomen?
2. Wat is voor de gemeente op dit moment de motivatie om zich bezig te houden met Europese stedenbanden?
3. Wie coördineert de voortgang van het partnerschap binnen de gemeente (bestuur en besluitvorming)?
4. Welk beleid draagt bij aan de voortgang van Town Twinning bij uw gemeente?
5. Hoeveel fte wordt binnen de gemeente besteed aan stedenbanden? Hoeveel daarvan per (Europese) stedenband?
6. Initieert de gemeente de activiteiten (verantwoordelijkheid voor uitvoering)?
7. Zijn er ook andere partijen die activiteiten initiëren?
 - Zo ja, is daar een bepaalde verdeling in? (m.b.t. aantallen, inhoud, of anderszins)
7. Hoeveel activiteiten hebben in totaal in het afgelopen jaar (2012) plaatsgevonden, tussen de gemeente en de Europese partners?
 - Hoeveel daarvan waren het initiatief van de gemeente?
 - Hoeveel daarvan waren burgerlijke/organisatie-initiatieven?
8. Is dit aantal afwijkend van voorgaande jaren?
9. Hoe worden activiteiten gefinancierd?:
 - Is er budget vanuit de gemeente beschikbaar voor de activiteiten met de Europese partners? Verschilt dit per stedenband?
 - Zijn er nog andere bronnen waarmee de activiteiten worden gefinancierd?
 - Zo ja, welke en hoe verhoudt zich het stedelijk aandeel tot het aandeel van deze derde bronnen?

Inhoud van de activiteiten

10. Welke criteria worden gehanteerd voor de acceptatie van een activiteit?
 - Hoeveel activiteiten zijn er het afgelopen jaar 2012 ingediend respectievelijk geweigerd?

Geaccepteerde activiteiten, per project:

11. Wat is de doelgroep van de activiteit?
12. Welk doel wordt met deze activiteit beoogd?
13. Zijn de doelstellingen behaald? Zijn er nog andere effecten?
14. Welke criteria worden gehanteerd ten behoeve van de evaluatie?
 - Kunt u drie kernwoorden noemen die de effecten van een geslaagde activiteit weergeven?

Gemeentespecifieke vragen¹²³:

15. Vindt u dat er met betrekking tot Town Twinning gezegd kan worden dat er in [stad] sprake is van een bottom-up mechanisme?
16. De EU ziet stedenbanden als indicator voor bevordering van de Europese identiteit, wat is uw mening hierover?

¹²³ Additional questions were added to enhance understanding of municipality specific features.

Appendix 1 - Interview questions (English version)

General questions:

1. How many Town Twinning partnerships does the municipality have within Europe?
 - a. How were these partnerships established?
2. What motivates the municipality to be involved in Town Twinning (with European towns specifically)?
3. Who coordinates the partnership's continuation within the municipality (management and decision making)?
4. What policy contributes to the continuation of town twinning within your municipality?
5. What amount of FTE (full-time equivalent) is available for Town Twinning? How does that translate to each of the (European) partnerships?
6. Does the municipality initiate the activities (responsibility for implementation)?
7. Are other parties able to initiate activities?
8. If yes, does a regulated division exist between initiating parties, with regard to the amount of activities, content, etc.?*¹²⁴
9. How many activities have taken place during the previous year (2012) between the municipality and European partners?
 - a. How many were initiated by the municipality?
 - b. How many were initiated by citizens/organisations?
10. Does this amount defer from that of preceding years?
11. How are town twinning activities financed?
 - a. Is there municipal budget available for town twinning activities? How is this divided between each of the partnerships?
 - b. Are other sources used to finance the activities?
 - c. If yes, which other sources are used; and what is the proportion of the municipality's part to third parties' share?

Content of the activities

1. Which criteria are employed before an activity is accepted?
 - a. How many activities (activity plans) were submitted in the previous year of 2012, and how many were rejected?

For each of the accepted activities:

2. Who is the target group?
3. What are the activity's aims?
4. Have the objectives been achieved? Can any other effects be observed?
5. What criteria are employed for evaluation?
 - a. Please state three keywords that describe the effects of a successful activity.

Other questions

1. With regard to Town Twinning, could we speak of a bottom-up mechanism in your municipality?
2. How does the municipality value the difference between Global Town Twinning and European Town Twinning?
3. In the EU's view, town twinning is an indicator for the promotion of European Identity. What is your opinion on this?

¹²⁴ For example: Municipality initiates 90% of all activities, other 10% initiated by party X.

Appendix 2 - Interview Transcriptions

Transcriptions are available on request.