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SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BYDGOSZCZ AND TORUŃ IN THE PERCEPTION OF THEIR INHABITANTS

ABSTRACT. The aim of this study was to present the social perceptions and ties between the inhabitants of Toruń and Bydgoszcz. It has been stated that the inhabitants of both of the towns notice the necessity of the mutual co-operation in every sphere. It is thus the first step that the towns of Toruń and Bydgoszcz could build strong ties with the support and help of their inhabitants. Politicians creating the mutual relations between the towns may surely count on the fact that from the social side there will be no counteracts and activities making the integration of the two towns difficult.

KEY WORDS: Toruń, Bydgoszcz, perception

The close vicinity of two strong city centres, Toruń and Bydgoszcz, in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship inclines to a deeper reflection about their mutual economic, political, cultural and social relations. The contemporary state of the market economy force not only companies to join into international concerns, but also regions and towns to join into strong organisms. The aim of such an activity is the quicker and more stable development of the region and the increase of its competitiveness on both the national and the global market. The economic and political conditions are considered to force such consolidation in each life sphere. Therefore it is a serious challenge for the Bydgoszcz-Toruń agglomeration to create a region strong enough to compete with other regions gaining strategic investors or at least financial resources from the structural funds of the European Union. Politicians and the development vision propagated by them, besides the economic potential, have the greatest impact on the chances of our region. Nevertheless, the identification of the area on economic, natural, transportation, organi-

sational, and first of all social and mental level is just as important. The last two are so significant that there are very frequent disagreements difficult to explain rationally between the local communities that may considerably delay and hinder the development of the region. Therefore an investigation was conducted on the theme of the mutual perception of the towns Toruń and Bydgoszcz by their inhabitants. In the questionnaire devised by the author, questions relate to the perception of economic, scientific, cultural and social problems. This paper is limited to presenting the social perceptions and ties between the inhabitants of Toruń and Bydgoszcz. Among the social questions that the inhabitants were asked the most interesting ones were connected with the perception of the ties in the cultural sphere. Below we present the results of the questionnaire.

Over 50% of Toruń inhabitants have friends in Bydgoszcz, and more than 40% of them have family connections with the inhabitants of Bydgoszcz. In Bydgoszcz these percentages are considerably lower. Only one fourth of the inhabitants under study has family in Toruń, and 37% of them friends. The survey in this case showed that the attractions of Toruń to Bydgoszcz are much bigger because only less than 6% of the Toruń inhabitants have no family or social ties with Bydgoszcz. In Bydgoszcz this percent is much higher and equals 28%.

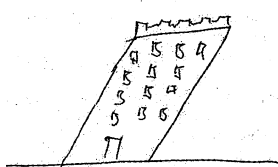
Among the studied persons nearly 84% of Bydgoszcz inhabitants visited monuments in Toruń. For the question, "what good thing would you tell a tourist about Toruń?", as much as 10% answered that there is nothing good to tell about this town. About 25% would propose to visit monuments, among them the monument of Copernicus, the old Town, the Tilted Tower, churches and the Tuba Dei bell. Only an insignificant number of surveyed people would propose to taste Toruń's gingerbread and to visit the planetarium. Less than 20% of the respondents think that Toruń is beautiful, rich in traditions and in history with a special ambience. A few of them noticed that there are some good restaurants in Toruń where one can spend time with pleasure, whether in the evenings or during the daytime. Among the answers there were also negative opinions concerning Toruń stating derogatively for example that it is not worth visiting Toruń because it is a "village".

On the basis of the survey we can state that less than 30% of the Toruń inhabitants visited the monuments in Bydgoszcz. The majority of respondents who did not visit monuments in Bydgoszcz mentioned as a reason that there is nothing to visit in Bydgoszcz, because Bydgoszcz is not a tourist town.

The survey has also shown that it is difficult for the inhabitants of Toruń to say anything positive about Bydgoszcz. The largest group – 33%, would not say anything good about Bydgoszcz to a tourist. The second biggest group – 14%, also would not say anything praiseworthy reasoning that they do not know this town well enough to propose anything. About 16% of the respondents did not give any answer to this question. Only 8% of Toruń dwellers think that Bydgoszcz is a nice and interesting town. They would propose a tourist to visit the

monuments of Bydgoszcz, especially splendid churches, the Bydgoszcz channel or the granaries by the Brda River. Moreover, barely 10% of the Toruń inhabitants would propose taking a rest in Myślęcinek, going to the opera or the philharmonic orchestra in the centre of Bydgoszcz, visiting quality music clubs and making use of the cheap and reliable accommodation. There were also answers giving very unfriendly opinions about Bydgoszcz, e.g. "Bydgoszcz is an industrial town, without a climate," or that it is "dirty with one long street, Dworcowa, and nothing else."

Among the associations of Toruń inhabitants on the subject of Bydgoszcz, speedway was on the first place, then the opera, and the philharmonic orchestra. Further Bydgoszcz is associated with dirt and mess, industrial plants (even with *Romet* which went bankrupt some time ago), then with roundabouts, car crashes, stadiums, Dworcowa street, the former voivodeship (administrative regions of the 1st order), Fordon, "taking away everything", and unkind people.



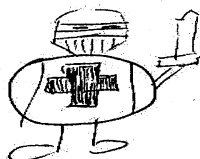
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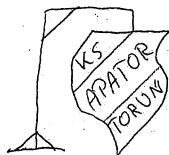
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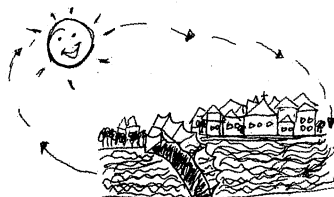
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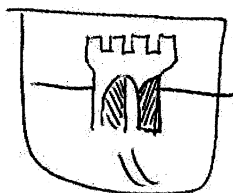
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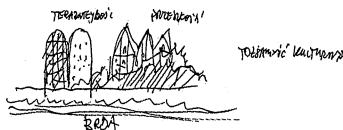
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i)

Explanations of the symbols:

- a) the Tilted Tower
- b) Nicholas Copernicus
- c) vandalism
- d) "a Teutonic Knight", a derogative nickname for the dwellers of Toruń
- e) death for the opposing speedway club
- f) the panorama of Toruń from the bridge
- g) Bydgoszcz's coat of arms
- h) vandalism
- i) the panorama of Bydgoszcz

The associations of Bydgoszcz inhabitants about Toruń were much more kind and friendly. Toruń is identified first of all with Nicholas Copernicus, gingerbread and the university. On further places we can find monuments, speedway, the planetarium, the Tilted Tower and the old town. Other key words, thoughts and associations were: Radio Maryja, Philadelphia Boulevard, beautiful architecture and different types of entertainment. Besides, some people from Bydgoszcz associate Toruń with gang wars, hostility of Toruń inhabitants towards Bydgoszcz, Szeroka street, *Kopernik* – gingerbread producer; *Elana* and *Apator* factories, and conceitedness. Moreover, in the light of the study carried out we can state that belief in a widespread usage of the invectives concerning the towns is much exaggerated as only 1% of Bydgoszcz inhabitants call the inhabitants of Toruń *Krzyżaki* (*Teutonic Knights*). On the other hand, the percentage of people in Toruń who talk offensively about Bydgoszcz and its inhabitants as *Tyfusowo* (*Typhoid Town*) or *Tyfusy* (*Typhuses / Typhus Fever Carriers*) equals 8%.

In the questionnaire the inhabitants of both towns were asked to draw a symbol or an image associated with the other town. Below we show the most interesting illustrations.

We have to underline here that in spite of the fact that only a small part of the respondents talked unkindly about each other (*Typhus*, *Teutonic Knight*) a considerable part of the drawings from Bydgoszcz show the inhabitants of Toruń as Teutonic Knights, while the inhabitants of Toruń in the place meant for drawing wrote, "I would draw Typhus if I could."

Due to the limited size of this paper we do not detail all of the thematic aspects. We should however mention here that the inhabitants of both towns are not very strongly interested in enterprises organised jointly by both towns (Table 1). For example, none of the respondents had heard about the commonly organised Swedish Days (29.09 – 3.10.2000) or about the collaborative exhibition in Hannover (in 2000).

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who heard about the performances organised together by Bydgoszcz and Toruń

	CHAIN FOR PEACE	CHESS MATCH	CULTURAL PERFORMANCES	SPORT	ECONOMIC FORUM	PROBALTICA	I DON'T KNOW	NO ANSWER
Bydgoszcz	4.0	1.0	5.0	9.0	1.0	0.0	68.0	12.0
Toruń	3.0	0.0	0.0	16.0	2.0	2.0	73.0	4.0

Source: Elaborated on the basis of survey study among the inhabitants of Toruń and Bydgoszcz in 2000.

In this paper we also have to take into consideration and at the same time underline the answers of the Toruń and Bydgoszcz inhabitants concerning the

relations between the towns. The answers of the residents of the studied two towns were very similar, however the inhabitants of Bydgoszcz expressed their opinion more optimistically about the relations between the towns. The inhabitants of Toruń perceive this relation more critically, a higher number of persons assessed it as bad or very bad. These answers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Relations between Toruń and Bydgoszcz (in %)

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	BAD	VERY BAD	NOT GOOD NOR BAD	DEPENDS ON WHAT FIELD	Σ
Bydgoszcz	1.30	28.10	28.80	5.90	35.90	0.00	100.0
Toruń	0.70	19.30	29.30	8.60	40.70	1.40	100.0

Source: Elaborated on the basis of survey study among the inhabitants of Toruń and Bydgoszcz in 2000.

In this place we should pay a special attention to the fact that, however, the residents of Bydgoszcz in a higher degree notice the relation between the two towns as 'good' or 'very good' they are less satisfied by the present division of power and authority. According to them both the Marshall Office and the Province Office should be located in Bydgoszcz, in the town twice bigger than Toruń.

It is worth underlining the optimistic fact that Bydgoszcz as well as Toruń notice the necessity of closer co-operation between the towns. 80% of Bydgoszcz inhabitants feels the importance of the closer co-operation with Toruń, almost the same percentage of Toruń inhabitants – 78.8%, wish to co-operate with Bydgoszcz. We can see from this that the necessity of tighter co-operation is commonly articulated by the inhabitants of both towns.

In Bydgoszcz, most respondents (almost 30%) state that there is a necessity for a closer co-operation between the two towns in the cultural sphere. Then they mention co-operation in the economic sphere (17.4%), in sciences, especially between higher schools (15.4%), administration (8.7%), sport (5.4%) and tourism (3.4%). 10% of the respondents state that co-operation is necessary in every field. Only less than 5% among the studied inhabitants see no reason in further co-operation and believe that Bydgoszcz can manage on its own.

In Toruń the most adherents of closer co-operation can be found also in the cultural sphere (27.9%). Economy is on the second place (23%), next politics (11.8%), science – between higher schools (11%), sport (6.6%), the social sphere (3.7%) and tourism (2.2%). 8% of the respondents think that co-operation is necessary in every field. There are also very few inhabitants in Toruń who think that Toruń and Bydgoszcz are so strong and self-sufficient towns with different goals and tasks that they do not need to tighten bonds and tend towards an

integrated metropolitan area. It is a general opinion that the weak side of Bydgoszcz is the cultural-educational sphere. It seems that the inhabitants of Bydgoszcz notice that fact. They think that a close co-operation with Toruń should be developed just in this particular field. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Toruń, where the unemployment is much higher than in Bydgoszcz, think that firstly there should be a closer co-operation in the economic sphere.

In the survey there were also questions concerning the domains of the economic, cultural and political spheres in which Bydgoszcz decidedly dominates over Toruń and vice versa (Table 3).

Table 3. Domains in which Bydgoszcz has a decided dominance over Toruń and in which Toruń dominates over Bydgoszcz

BYDGOSZCZ DOMINATES OVER TORUŃ				TORUŃ DOMINATES OVER BYDGOSZCZ			
ANSWERS FROM TORUŃ		ANSWERS FROM BYDGOSZCZ		ANSWERS FROM TORUŃ		ANSWERS FROM BYDGOSZCZ	
domain	%	domain	%	domain	%	domain	%
industry	27.9	culture	23.1	culture	28.3	culture	13.9
more firms	2.9	economy	18.2	high schools	19.6	high schools	13.9
banks	2.9	industry	8.4	science	18.8	science	9.0
culture	15.8	banks	5.6	monuments	21.0	monuments	9.0
high schools	1.4	sport	10.5	tourism	8.0	tourism	3.5
media	2.1	fair	4.2	education	7.2	performances	2.8
speedway	1.4	everything	2.1	industry	1.4	sport	1.4
medicine	0.7	medicine	1.4	speedway	0.7	other	2.1
airport	0.7	high schools	0.7				
Σ YES	47.9	Σ YES	60.1	Σ YES	70.3	Σ YES	43.0
Σ NO	52.1	Σ NO	39.9	Σ NO	29.7	Σ NO	57.0
TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

Source: Based on the survey carried out among the inhabitants of Toruń and Bydgoszcz in 2000.

According to the inhabitants of Toruń Bydgoszcz has a decided dominance over Toruń first of all in the economic sphere. In their opinion Bydgoszcz has a more developed industry; there are more companies, banks, job vacancies. It is amazing that many people from Toruń state that the neighbouring town has a better developed cultural-educational sphere. Such a belief is based on the presence of the opera, the philharmonic orchestra, more cultural enterprises – especially musical ones. Among other advantages of Bydgoszcz respondents list: the bigger number of higher schools, better medical services, the media, speedway, and the airport.

28.3% of Toruń inhabitants state that Toruń dominates over Bydgoszcz mainly in the cultural-educational sphere. First of all they are proud of the university and scientific achievements. They also add to the dominating fields the numerous monuments and the better functioning tourist sphere.

The questions in the survey concerning the dominance of Bydgoszcz over Toruń in the eyes of the inhabitants of Bydgoszcz gave unexpected results. It is surprising that the people from Bydgoszcz mention their dominance in the cultural sphere in the first place, and only then in the second place economy (more developed industry, more banks and fairs). 2.1% of Bydgoszcz inhabitants perceive their dominance in every field.

The inhabitants of Bydgoszcz praise Toruń for the cultural-academic sphere. They admit that Toruń is a tourist town with numerous beautiful monuments, unlike Bydgoszcz.

There was also a question if inhabitants of Bydgoszcz would like to live in Toruń and opposite. There were more would-be movers in Bydgoszcz (35%), while in Toruń less than 3% of the inhabitants would move to the nearby town.

Summarising the survey results we should state that the inhabitants of both towns notice the necessity of a mutual co-operation in every sphere. It is thus the first step due to which the towns of Toruń and Bydgoszcz could build strong ties with the support and help of their inhabitants. Politicians creating the mutual relations between the towns may surely count on the fact that from the social sphere there will be no counteracts and activities that could make the integration of the two towns difficult.

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