
URBAN ISSUES

#participatory budgeting
#participation
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When dreams come true – urban land use and management trends desired by residents and participatory budgeting – a case study in Toruń

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Abstract

Social participation allows public authorities to learn about communities' views and thus to jointly work out satisfying solutions. The pre-1989 law in Poland generally prevented the possibility of citizens taking part in the making of decisions about the use of public areas. Over the following years participatory decision-making was adopted, which evolved and expanded as new tools were introduced which encourage citizen involvement. The municipality of Toruń adopted a participatory approach to budgeting in 2014 so that the city's residents could influence the use of public land in their neighbourhoods according to their needs. The total amount of funding spent on participatory budgets between 2014 and 2017 exceeded PLN 26 million. The aim of the study is to prepare a typology of desired changes in the city of Toruń and to identify the level of social participation on the basis of projects nominated for financing from the participatory budget. To this end, the types of projects and the turnout of the residents who voted were analysed by place of residence. The study showed that both the number of nominated projects and the number of voters increased in the years covered by the survey, thus pointing to the success of participatory budgeting, a form of schooling in local democracy, in Toruń.

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Introduction

Before 1989 Polish law generally prevented residents from making decisions on the use of public areas. The participatory decision-making process introduced from that year onwards was continually developed and enhanced by introducing new options. Participatory decision-making, or social participation, is a process based on 'the involvement of individuals in the affairs of a wider community, cooperation with others in a situation of dependence of interests' that allows the 'formulation of the social ideal, desired shape and democratic order' (Surdej 2000: 83–84). It serves as a vehicle for public authorities to learn about the views of individual residents and thus enables the achievement of a common, satisfying result for the community (Rogoff 2011).

The goal of the study is to typify the changes desired in the city of Toruń and identify the level of social participation on the basis of the projects nominated for financing from the participatory budget.

The decision to choose Toruń was based on the fact that it is an exceptional research field. On the one hand, Toruń places great emphasis on cooperation between the city and its inhabitants. For example, in 2017, the city authorities made available over PLN 7 million to residents as part of the participatory budget. This is definitely a much larger sum than in other cities of similar size or even bigger cities in Poland. On the other hand, the choice of Toruń was also dictated by the desire to analyse the phenomenon discussed in the context of a student city. Each year over 30,000 students are living in Toruń, and they are strongly encouraged to submit projects and participate in votes on the participatory budget. It is a kind of school for democracy and it accustoms students to deciding about the space around them in cooperation with the city authorities.

The results of this research were then used to answer the following questions: 1) How similar are the residents of the different districts of Toruń regarding their acceptance of social participation measured by their involvement in participatory budgeting? 2) Did the number of residents voting on participatory projects tend to increase from year to year? 3) What was the hierarchy of projects, i.e. what types of change in urban areas were preferred by the residents? 4) Did their expectations change depending on time and location?

Social participation

While social participation has different definitions in the literature, their common foundation is the participation of residents, space users, in a decision-making process in order to ensure that spatial changes are consistent with public expectations. In spatial planning, social participation helps prevent the occurrence of community conflicts

that are very likely when new uses are proposed for public areas. The term became fashionable in the 1970s as an attribute of a modern society (Fagence 1977).

In the First Warsaw Agenda 21, social participation is presented as citizens' involvement in making decisions on and managing local matters (*Pierwsza Warszawska Agenda 21*). The spatial planning law grants citizens the right to participate in plan making and implementing spatial policies and to have a voice about various aspects of the process. Because social participation is used to enable local residents to express their opinions and preferences on vital community issues, such as the use of land in the neighbourhood (Siemiński 2007), it must be handled responsibly and with awareness of the impacts of the decisions being made. It is also an inclusive process in the sense that all residents can review and comment on the planning documents, such as the Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of a Commune and the Local Spatial Management Plan. The right to contribute to all stages of the planning process is a civic entitlement of citizens and their representatives (*Pierwsza Warszawska Agenda 21*).

All residents participating in decision-making on local issues can have a real influence on the course of action the authorities adopt by freely expressing their opinions. Moreover, as they outnumber local decision-makers, it is more often than not that the community's interests are secured to its satisfaction.

The broad concept of social participation emphasises social interaction and describes a community as both a contributor and a beneficiary of resources enhancing its physical and spatial environment. Thereby, the concept encompasses a variety of forms and levels of activity and cooperation (Levasseur et al. 2010).

Participatory decision-making is a relatively new phenomenon associated with the development of a democratic system interpreted in terms of a civil society or an empowered, responsible and democratic society where the active involvement of citizens has replaced the 'passer-by' attitude prevalent in less mature social systems.

Participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting is one of the tools of social participation that allow community members to have a say on how public funds should best be used (de Sousa Santos 1998; Kębłowski 2013; Rachwał 2013; Poniatowicz 2014; Czarnecki 2014; Kołodziejczyk 2016). The difference between participatory budgeting and other tools of social dialogue is that authorities make funding decisions based on the needs reported by the residents. Participatory budgeting is therefore the most developed form of participation: joint decision-making (Długosz & Wygnański 2005; Gliński 2007; Wampler 2010; Friendly

2016). The first city to have introduced this form of public governance was Porto Alegre in Brazil in 1989 (Navarro 2004; Cabannes 2004; Łukomska-Szarek 2014; Burchard-Dziubińska 2014), from which it fairly quickly spread to other countries, mainly in Latin America and Europe.

Until not long ago, participatory budgeting was viewed in Poland as a novelty from an overseas country. Its mechanism was known to few, and still fewer believed that it might be effectively introduced in Poland. Doubts were dispelled in 2015 with more than 171 Polish towns and cities having been found to use participatory budgeting (Kocot 2014; Szaranowicz-Kusz 2016; Sobol 2017). The wave of changes that embraced Poland during the last 30 years has had many impacts on local and regional management. The strengthening of the middle level of administration has been accompanied by the replacement of local government with local governance (Andrew & Goldsmith 1998; Bardhan & Mookherjee 2006; Środa-Murawska et al. 2017; Stoker 2017). With changes in the approach to public management, new methods conducive to participatory budgeting have been developed. Numerous organisations and minor votes supporting local governance provide citizens with an opportunity to accommodate to the new situation, as well as making the public ready for new advancements in broadly defined social participation (Brownell 1980; Abers 2000; Kaźmierczak 2011).

That more and more Polish towns and cities choose to introduce participatory budgeting is a fact. The first city to launch a participatory budget was Sopot (in 2011), which was soon followed by Elbląg, Poznań and Zielona Góra and a number of other municipalities. It also resulted in a growing number of studies on the mechanisms and effects of the impact of participatory budgeting in Polish cities based on the example of, among other cities, Łódź (e.g. Gałęcki 2013; Słomczewska 2013; Borowski 2015; Brzeziński 2016; Kalisiak-Mędelska 2016; Leśniewska-Napierała 2017; Radziszewski 2018), Krakow (e.g. Jaśkowiec 2017; Kołodziej-Hajdo 2017), Olsztyn (e.g. Nowak 2017), Poznań (e.g. Kotus 2013; Kalisiak-Mędelska 2016), Warsaw (e.g. Laskowska 2017; Pietrusińska 2017) and Wrocław (e.g. Kajdanek 2016; Adamiczka 2017; Tatarowska & Furmankiewicz 2018).

Participatory budgeting, like the other tools for social dialogue, has several stages. The procedure used to implement it is very similar or even identical in most Polish cities. It is organised in much the same way as any other statutory action and comprises:

- a) a call for residents to submit project proposals;
- b) the evaluation and selection of projects in terms of their feasibility;
- c) the selection of projects to be funded by the authorities;
- d) the implementation of projects (Martela 2013: 25).

The above model also includes promotional and informational and educational activities as appropriate.

While participatory budgeting as implemented by Polish municipalities basically follows the above four-stage pattern, it also has its unique characteristics, such as citizens' involvement, the approach to distributing funds, citizens being able to propose projects, and the open character of the process. An additional benefit of the approach is that the participating residents get training in local democracy.

As the practice indicates, the key elements of an ideal participatory budget can be distinguished:

- the residents' decisions are binding on the authorities;
- the process of creating and managing a participatory budget is transparent and open;
- it provides space for discussion;
- it supports the activity of residents;
- it is planned over a period of years;
- it includes a large amount of money (Kocot 2014; Głogowski 2016; Krawczyk 2016).

Methodology

The starting point for the achievement of the objective adopted in the study was to collect information on projects nominated for the participatory budget. In Toruń residents submit projects to the participatory budget through a dedicated form including a short description of the project. Then, a list of projects nominated for voting (which have met the formal evaluation criteria) is published on the City of Toruń's website in the form of a summary table containing the title of the project, its location, cost, and a brief description.

The data collected and used in this study are public data from the official website of the City of Toruń (<https://www.torun.pl>) regarding projects nominated for the participatory budget in Toruń in 2014-2017. The data published by the Department of Social Communication and Information of the City of Toruń and used in this study include titles, brief descriptions of projects and locations (districts).

In total, data were collected describing the 578 projects nominated for voting (for the years 2014-2017), 197 of which were later selected by the inhabitants of Toruń for implementation. The study was therefore based on desk research.

During the collection of data, their substantive content was consulted with an employee of the Department of Social Communication and Information of the City of Toruń.

The titles and abbreviated descriptions of projects from 2014-2017 permitted the creation of a typology of

desired changes in the area covered by the city of Toruń. The following types were distinguished:

- 1) safety, security and order – projects related to the improvement of security (e.g. by introducing additional lighting, adapting space to people with disabilities) and introducing a new arrangement of space (e.g. new rubbish bins);
- 2) road infrastructure – projects including the modernisation of roads, pavements, etc.;
- 3) culture and education – all projects that concern cultural and educational facilities as well as cultural and educational events;
- 4) sport and recreation – tasks related to the modernisation of sports areas (e.g. sports fields), recreational areas (development of parks, creation or renovation of playgrounds, etc.) as well as sport and recreational events;
- 5) environment – planting new trees, facilities for animals (e.g. construction of bird boxes);
- 6) other – projects that did not fit into the 5 categories above.

The projects under study focus on the development of urban areas, but include both morphological and functional changes. The morphological approach refers to the creation or change of spatially defined places (e.g. streets, squares), while the functional approach includes the broadcasting or changing of the function of a given area (e.g. meeting area, sports area) (Jaroszewska-Brudnicka 2010).

It should be remembered that many factors influence the nature of changes in urban space. The primary changes in urban space were related to historical aspects and other specific conditions. Nowadays, the processes of globalisation and metropolisation have a major impact on the changes taking place in cities. The effects of these changes can be found in various areas of life in the sphere of economy, culture, and the organisation of social life (Karwińska 2015). The effect characteristic of the changes taking place in the urban space of Polish cities is the broadly conceived succession of function, which consists in replacing unnecessary or unused areas by investments that provide new functions. Often these are service functions, information production functions or cultural functions (Jałowicki 2005).

Another, more and more often observed reason for the changes taking place in urban space are social changes related to development processes and the strengthening of civic attitudes. An increase in social activity is also noticeable in the participation of residents in the participatory budget, which, as a rule, is a tool for an inhabitant's agreement with the local authority. The result of

this cooperation is the development of a solution suitable for each of the sides (Kalisiak-Mędelaska 2016). Very often the participatory budget is a tool for introducing changes to the surrounding area.

Bearing in mind the above directions of changes taking place in the space of Polish cities, it can be stated that the model of changes is complex and ambiguous, and Polish cities are experiencing a multifaceted socio-cultural and spatial transformation.

The database thus created allowed the assigning of projects to selected types. Then, cartographic material was generated for analyses using GIS software.

The next stage was related to field mapping. From April to May 2018, all those projects already implemented were inventoried using cycle transport. They were also photographed.

Results

Toruń lies in the centre of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship on the Vistula River, which divides the town into northern and southern parts that belong to Pomerania and Kuyavia, respectively. It has an area of 115.75 km² (*Strategia rozwoju miasta Torunia...* 2015) and a population density of 1,750 people per sq. km (according to Local Data Bank of the Polish Central Statistical Office as of 31 Dec. 2017). Administratively, it has the status of a powiat and is the seat of the marshal of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. In 1997, Toruń's Old Town was listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a world heritage site.

Since its very beginning in 2014, participatory budgeting in Toruń has been managed by the Department of Social Communication and Information of the City of Toruń by virtue of the City Council's Resolution on participatory budgeting in Toruń and the amendment of Rules on Social Consultation (*Uchwała nr 655/13 Rady Miasta Torunia...*). The resolution provides that a participatory budget may not be less than 6.0% of the property tax revenue that the municipality collected two years prior to the adoption of the budget.

Between 2014 and 2017 the amount of funding allocated to participatory budgets by the Toruń authorities increased from PLN 6,440,000 to PLN 7,030,000 in 2017, reaching a cumulative total of PLN 26,650,000.

Toruń proved to have a bigger participatory budget (annually ca. PLN 6,600,000) than other municipalities with a comparable population such as Radom and Gdynia (PLN 4,500,000), Olsztyn (PLN 3,500,000), Bielsko-Biała (PLN 3,750,000), and Gliwice (PLN 2,500,000), as well as several larger cities such as Bydgoszcz (ca PLN 5,000,000) and Szczecin (PLN 6,000,000 in 2016).

The participatory budget of Toruń comprises a general element (30%) and a local element (70%) that is distributed among the city's 13 districts (municipal auxiliary units – Fig. 4) in the following manner:

- 50% of funds are equally divided among all districts;
- 25% of funds are apportioned based on the number of residents in a district on 1 January of the year when the allocation is calculated;
- 25% of funds are apportioned based on the district area on 1 January of the year when the allocation is calculated.

The general element is intended to finance the needs of all residents in the city. Therefore, for a project to be eligible for funding it must have an impact on at least two districts or be unrelated to any specific district.

To encourage project submissions and voter participation, the municipality of Toruń launches promotional activities, sets up project writing meetings, and campaigns in the local and social media on behalf of participatory budgeting.

In the years 2014–2017, Toruń residents nominated an average of 145 projects a year for funding.

Toruń compares favourably with other municipalities with comparable populations

in terms of the number of projects nominated for funding, e.g. Bielsko-Biała (85), Radom (105) and Olsztyn (110). However, each of them, Toruń included, should be compared with Częstochowa where every year more than 400 projects are submitted (*Budżet Obywatelski Bielska-Białej; Budżet Obywatelski w Radomiu; Olsztyński Budżet Obywatelski; Budżet Obywatelski w Częstochowie*).

Between 2014, the first year of participatory budgeting in the city, and 2016, the number of Toruń residents voting for projects increased from 22 226 (11%) to 27 925 (14%).

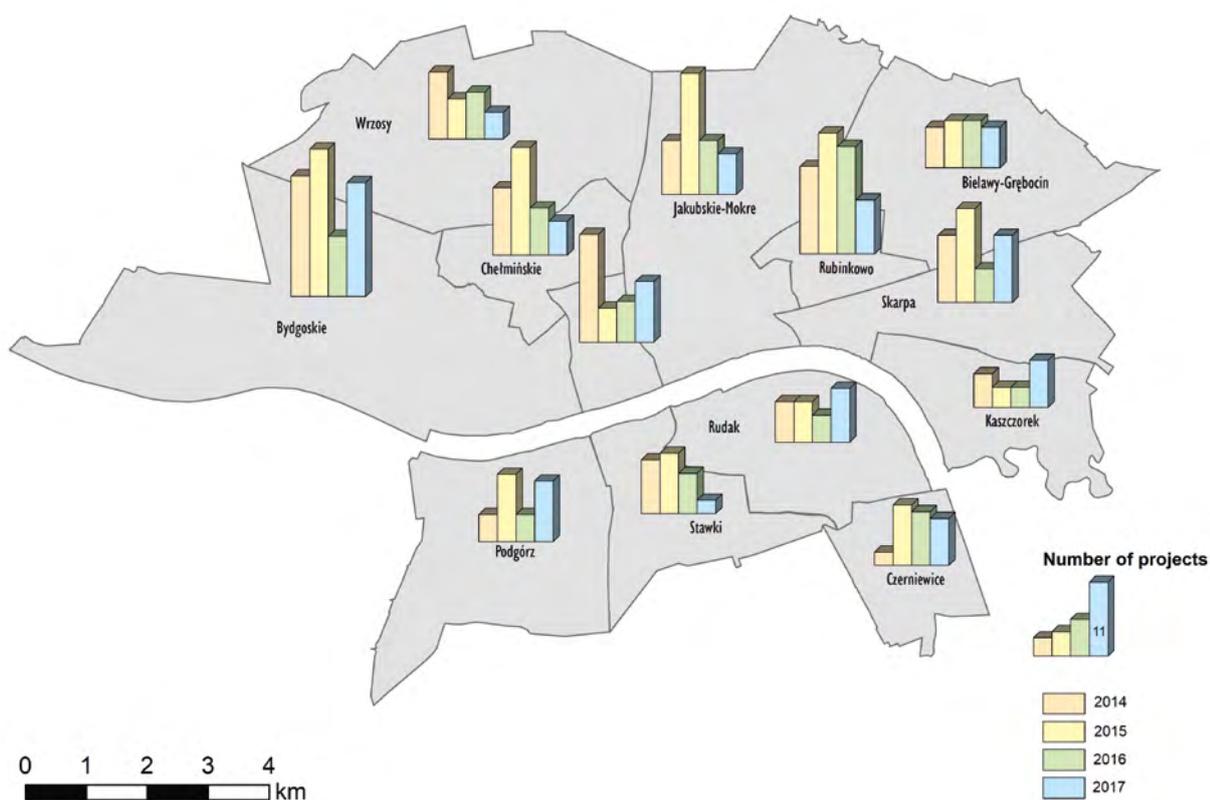
The turnout of residents voting on participatory projects did not make Toruń significantly different from other municipalities. For instance, in 2017 the Toruń rate of 10% was very close to that noted in Częstochowa (9%) and the same as in Sosnowiec (10%). The unquestionable leader among municipalities was Gdynia with a rate of 15% (*Budżet Obywatelski w Częstochowie; Budżet Obywatelski w Sosnowcu; Gdyniński Budżet Obywatelski*).

As the analysis revealed, in some Toruń districts the numbers of project proposals nominated for funding were noticeably higher (Fig. 1).

In that group of districts, Bydgoskie Przedmieście and Rubinkowo are noteworthy.

FIGURE 1

The numbers of projects from Toruń districts nominated for funding, years 2014–2017
 Source: calculated by the authors from Toruń City Hall data



The first of them is an old district complete with historic buildings where many initiatives are being undertaken by a strong local community in cooperation with non-governmental organisations. Rubinkowo is relatively new, as it came into being in the 1970s. As most of the area was developed with high-rise residential blocks, it has gradually assumed the function of a dormitory district for the city (Fig. 2a). Most projects proposed for Rubinkowo have to do with recreation because the district has many schools that apply for sport and recreation facilities each year. Although located on the school grounds, the facilities are accessible to all residents outside of school hours (Fig. 2b, 2c, 2d).

The districts on the south bank of Toruń (especially Rudak and Czerniewice) and on the north bank (Kaszczorek, Bielawy-Grębocin) are typical single-family house districts (Fig. 3a) where most properties are held privately. A likely explanation of why their residents submit fewer project proposals but willingly vote on the nominated projects is the relative shortage of local public spaces.

As can be seen, many of the proposed projects were designed to meet the recreational needs of the districts' residents (Fig. 3b, 3c, 3d).

As far as the age structure of voting residents is concerned, persons of working-age, i.e. aged 19–64 years, are the most active. In contrast, residents aged 16–18, 19–24 and older than 64 years were represented much less frequently (5%, 9% and 11% of voters, respectively).

The most active group of inhabitants participating in voting under the participatory budget in 2015 were people of working age (19–64 years old). Considering this group, their percentage amounted to 84 of all voters. Among them, the most active group are people aged 45–64 and in relation to the whole, it is who comprise 28% of voters. Another group of people participating in the participatory budget are people aged 25–34, in relation to the whole they constitute 25% of the total. Not much less, 22% of voters are people aged 35–44. People aged 16–18 are only 5% of those voting, while residents over 65 accounted for 11% of voters, of which 2% are over 75 years old. The age structure among people taking part in the voting coincides with the

FIGURE 2

Multi-family housing and completed projects in the district of Rubinkowo

(a) multi-family housing

(b) Project: 'The development of space around School Complex No. 16 for recreational use by pupils and Rubinkowo residents' (2015)

(c) Project: 'An athletics complex with a running track and throwing area' (School Complex No. 8) (2016)

(d) Project: 'The modernisation of the Halikowe playground' (Municipal Kindergarten No. 11) (2017)

Source: photos (a, c) by Paweł Smoliński, (b, d) by Leszek S. Dąbrowski

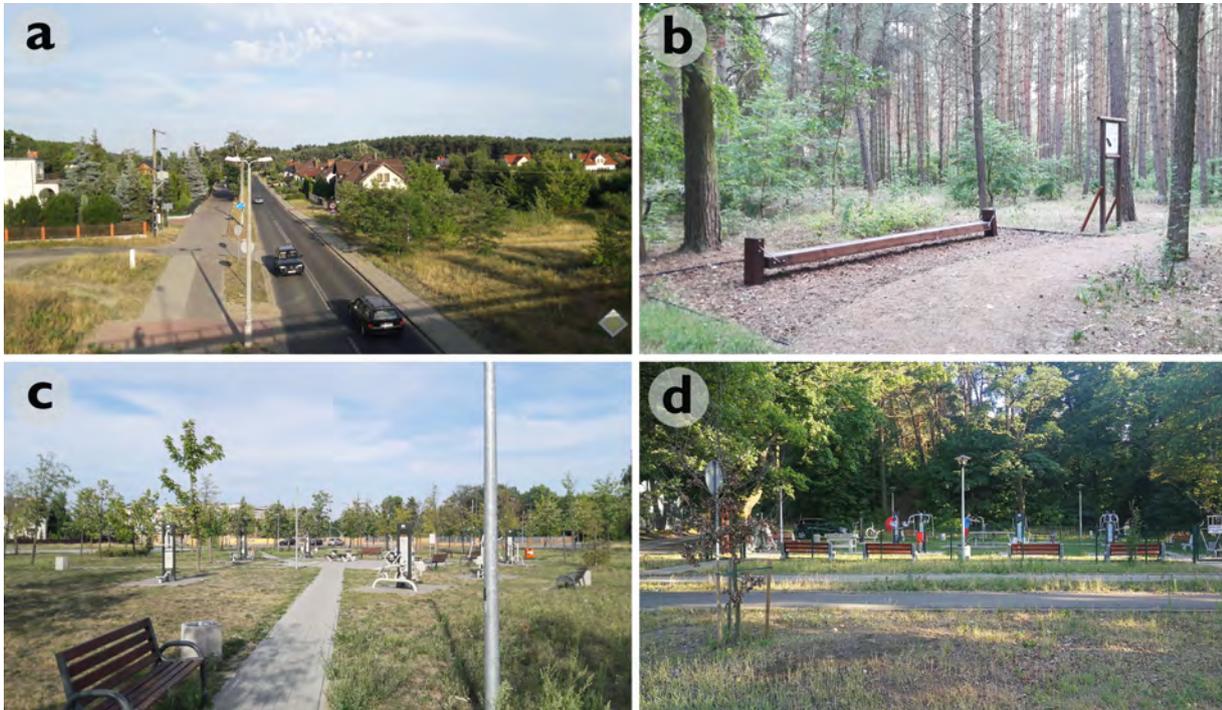


FIGURE 3

Completed projects in single-family house districts

- (a) A single-family housing estate (Kaszczorek district)
- (b) Project: 'A fitness trail with walking and running pathways in the Kaszczorek district' (2016)
- (c) Project: 'Leisure in the park' (Bielawy-Grębocin district) (2017)
- (d) Project: 'An outdoor fitness park' (Rudak district) (2014)

Source: photos (a-c) by Paweł Smoliński, (d) by Leszek S. Dąbrowski



general trend assuming that the turnout rate is the highest among middle-aged people, and the lowest among the youngest and the oldest citizens (Cześniak 2009: 127–129). A probable reason why most voters are of working age is that the majority of them are parents – hence their wish to create urban open spaces in the estates and in the city useful and attractive to their children.

Interestingly, in the districts that submitted the greatest numbers of projects (Bydgoskie, Rubinkowo), the voting turnouts were not the highest in the city, ranging between 16% and 26% (Fig. 4)

Much higher rates of voting residents, exceeding on average 1/3 of eligible persons, were noted in districts that proposed relatively few projects (Stawki, Rudak, Czerniewice, Bielawy-Grębocin, Skarpa). The only exception was the district of Kaszczorek (Fig. 4).

The high rates of voting residents in the districts on the south-bank of Toruń (Czerniewice, Rudak, Stawki and Podgórz) were probably mainly due to the districts being less developed compared with other areas in the city. Their position changed considerably in 2013, when the

construction of a new, second road bridge in the city redefined the previous trends of urban development in Toruń. As the districts were now easier to reach from the city centre, their undeveloped areas turned into a huge construction site. However, the fast rate at which the districts started to develop was caused not only by developers' activity, but also by the efforts of their 'old' residents to catch up with the northern districts and the 'new' residents' endeavours to influence the use and management of the areas around them. As both groups were focused on improving their neighbourhoods, they were more willing than other Toruń residents to use the social participation tools, including voting on projects for municipal funding.

Considering the relationship between the size of the city and the participation of residents, it can be noticed that with an increase in the size of city, the need for participation in social initiatives dwindles. In smaller communities, the number of face-to-face contacts increases and residents taking action for the common good feel stronger positive relationships with the local community of which they

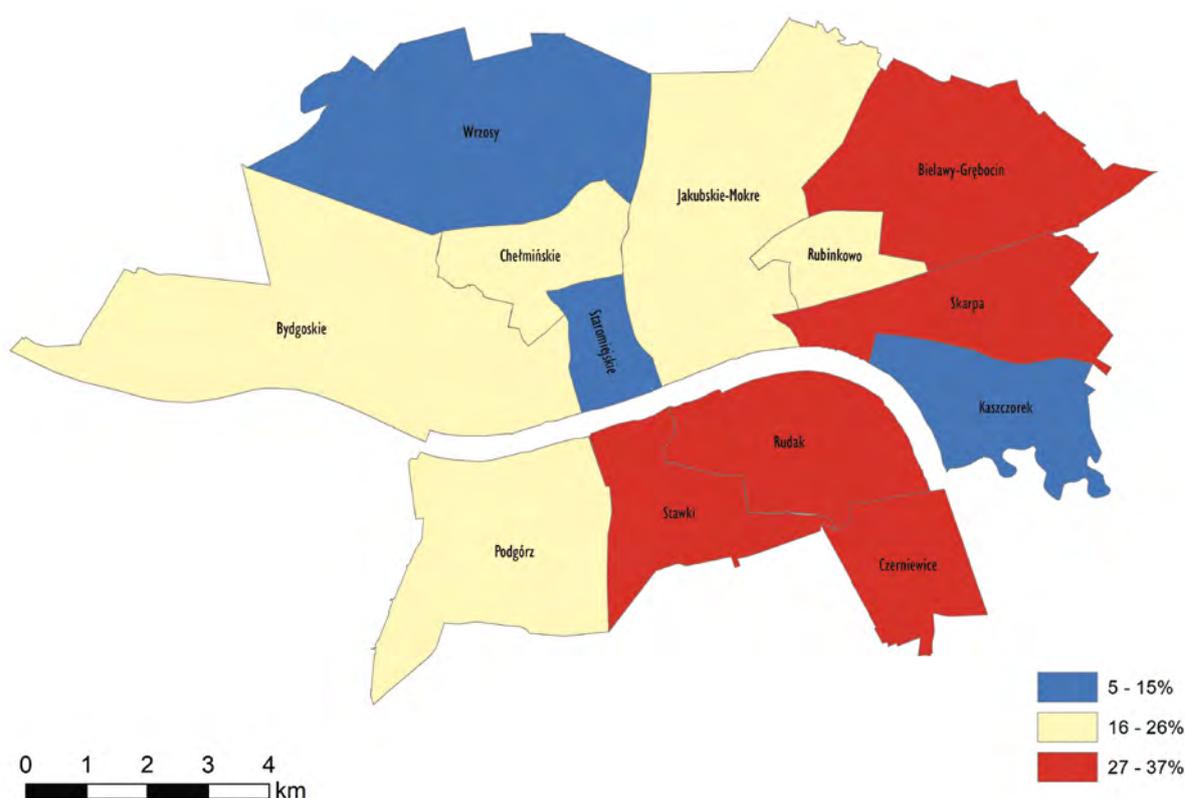


FIGURE 4
 Voting residents
 as a percentage of
 the electorate in
 a district in 2015
 Source: calculated
 by the authors from
 Toruń City Hall
 data

are members (Pietraszko-Furmanek 2012). With reference to the city of Toruń, it can be partially confirmed that this is the case because inhabitants of districts with a smaller number of inhabitants are more willing to participate in local initiatives compared to those in more populated ones.

A review of the projects nominated in the years 2014–2017, which was conducted to determine the types of changes desired by Toruń residents, revealed rising percentages of projects related to safety, security and order, declining percentages of road infrastructure projects, and steadily high rates of support for sport and recreation projects (Fig. 5).

The analysis of the city's districts provided additional information on how the residents' expectations about urban spaces evolved (Fig. 6).

In the years 2014–2015, most projects submitted from the districts in Toruń, in particular those on its north bank, requested road infrastructure. In the next two years the share of such projects considerably decreased.

The numbers of project proposals involving sport and recreation facilities increased each year. They are apparently more important in the south-bank districts, the ongoing development of which has not made up for the shortage of amenities.

The focus of many projects was on improving safety, security and order in urban areas (monitoring systems, lighting of public areas, etc.). In 2017, a high proportion of such projects was noted in the south-bank district of Podgórz, where residents do not feel safe enough and complain about untidy urban areas.

Conclusions

Participatory budgeting in Toruń has certainly met its objectives as a school for local democracy. The numbers of voters and projects nominated has increased, likewise the amount of funding allocated to participatory budgets expanded from PLN 6.5m in 2014, the first year of participatory budgeting, to slightly over 7m in 2017.

The numbers of projects nominated for implementation varied somewhat between the years. From 140 in 2014, the number of projects getting a green light rose to a record-high level of 180 in 2015, falling in the following year to 120, and rising again to 130 in 2017.

Persons of working age were the most numerous group among the Toruń residents voting on the projects nominated for the participatory budget.

The districts of Bydgoskie and Rubinkowo had especially high rates of nominated projects, which is quite understandable given their

FIGURE 5

The trends of spatial change desired by Toruń residents as seen in the projects nominated for the participatory budget

Source: calculated by the authors from Toruń City Hall data

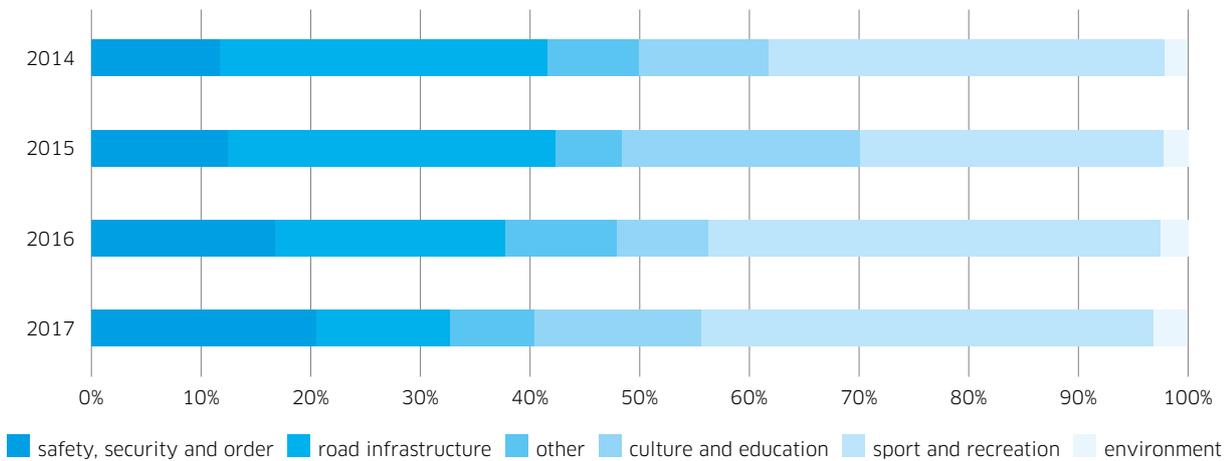
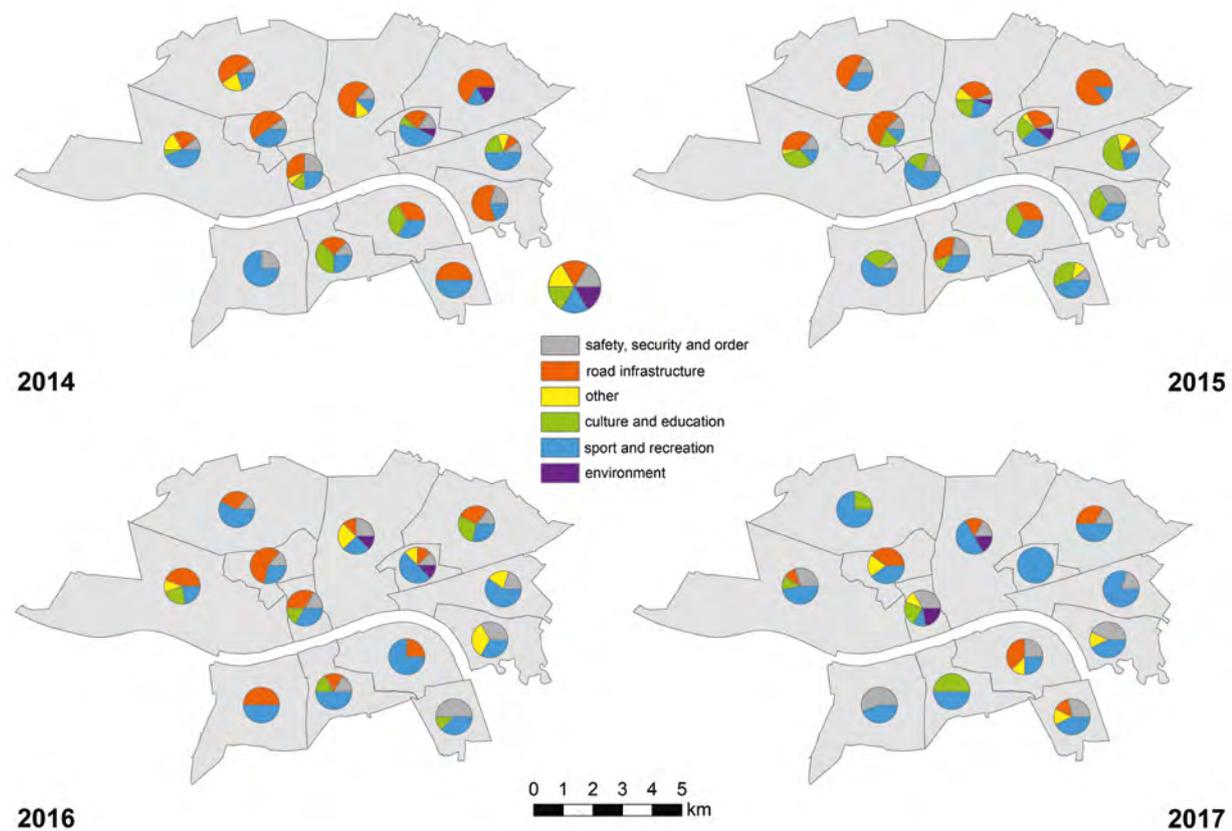


FIGURE 6

The trends in the spatial changes desired by residents in the different districts in Toruń as determined from the projects nominated for the participatory budget

Source: calculated by the authors from Toruń City Hall data



strong communities and the presence of many schools and NGOs actively developing new project proposals.

The involvement of the inhabitants of the Bydgoskie district in the conditions in the remaining quarters is due to the character of

this part of the city. This is a centrally located district, which was erected for the rich inhabitants of Toruń. It is full of townhouses, detached houses with gardens and green areas. Before the outbreak of WWII, it was an elite area (Jaroszevska-Brudnicka 2007; *Lokalny*

Program Rewitalizacji... 2012; Brodowska-Kowalska 2015). The character of the district changed after 1945 due to changes in the political system and the abolition of private property. This led to the influx of new groups of residents. After 1989, the estate was one of the most dangerous in terms of crime and law violations, characterised by high unemployment and the social exclusion of residents (*Lokalny Program Rewitalizacji...* 2012). In connection with the above, the estate has been included in the Local Regeneration Programme and starting from 2007 it is slowly changing its character. Bydgoskie district has been monitored, the state of public infrastructure has been improved, selected monuments have been renovated. The activities carried out also led to an increase in the interest of the residents in the areas around them and today this part of the city is counted among the most active in terms of bottom-up activities.

In turn, Rubinkowo is located in the eastern part of the city and constitutes a so-called residential district consisting of large blocks of flats. It was erected in the 1970s and 1980s and it was a response to growing housing needs related to the creation of new workplaces located in the western part of the city (Dembińska 1976). Rubinkowo was inhabited primarily by the working class. What is important was the emergence of a strong sense of community based on the existence of factories (Kmieć 2016). Nevertheless, the changes initiated after 1989 and deindustrialisation have contributed to changing the character of this part of the city, which, however, has remained quite homogeneous. There is an over-representation of older people (Jaroszewska-Brudnicka 2004) who have a similar professional background (Kmieć 2016). This type of social structure is conducive to greater internal integration (Verba & Nie 1987), which in turn may be reflected in the greater involvement of the community in, among other things, participatory activities.

In some districts, especially those on the south bank, the comparatively larger numbers of voters were probably

caused by the residents' efforts to improve their neighbourhoods so that they were more like those in the northern part of the city. This observed high civic activity also correlates with the structure of the inhabitants of these southern parts of the city. The opening of the new bridge over the Vistula in 2013 radically changed the character of the south bank. The creation of a new crossing has meant that previously inaccessible parts of the city have gained importance as a place of residence. The emerging new blocks of flats and single-family houses became desirable among young, highly educated residents of Toruń. High levels of education can also explain high commitment to public affairs in this case (Bukowski 2011).

The analysis of projects submitted in Toruń showed that most of them sought to improve public open spaces through sport and recreation, which can already be seen in the urban fabric. The number of road infrastructure projects submitted between 2014 and 2017 was smaller each year, probably because of the city authorities' commitment to improving the quality and availability of roads. An increase in projects focused on safety, security and order implies that Toruń residents still have unsatisfied needs in this area.

It was also noted that in 2014–2017, the percentage of modernisation projects was gradually decreasing in favour of new investments and soft projects. This means that the inhabitants of Toruń made the choice of meeting their needs in a hierarchical way. This behaviour, according to the authors, is carried out in the manner of Maslow's pyramid model, because initially hard projects related to repairs or renovations were carried out. Only with time, did the projects nominated concern the integration of local society and the personal development of the inhabitants of the districts of Toruń.

In general, it should be recognised that, just like in the case of Łódź, the projects implemented in Toruń have also contributed, above all, to the quality of life of the inhabitants (Kalisiak-Mędelka 2016). This is, after all, the main goal of implementing participatory budgets.

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