Chapter 11

Scenario for the New Town of Gorizia/Gorica

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Introduction

This chapter deals with border twin towns, that is to say towns which would be one if it were not for the presence of a state border between them. They belong to a special type of town in that they have characteristics in addition to those of "normal" towns, characteristics which emphasise their specificity. They appear to be more heterogeneous than other towns: in terms of the social groups living in them—especially those composed of state agencies (border police and their families); ethnic complexity; linguistic complexity; economic complexity; and in many cases the radicalisation of these features (both when a consensual synthesis is found and when differences remain and lead to conflict).

The case examined is that of Gorizia and Nova Gorica, whose configuration is a product of the border as it stands. When it was established by the victorious powers after the Second World War, Yugoslavia was assigned some eastern quarters of the Italian Gorizia (Salcano, San Pietro, Vrtojba), and within them plans were drawn up and implemented for the construction (in 1947) of a new Gorizia, which became Nova Gorica. As its name implies, this town was supposed to be a message and a dream of how things should be: socialist with the garden-city face of 19 and 20-century utopias (on the Ebenezer Howard model). After about 20 years these socialist and garden-city dreams began to pall, and on the other side there was resentment at the loss of the Italian part of the town and a sense of the superiority of old Gorizia. The feeling arose of a need to build active cooperation between the two towns and to achieve a form of union between them (differentiated integration, rather than a normal town like any other) even across a state border, though Italy and Slovenia both belong to the European Union, the Eurozone and the Schengen area.

The chapter explores the possible future of this union of two towns through the method of scenario building. The preliminary phase considers the basic values of the "new town", feelings of belonging to the two towns and the newly-explored one, and an assessment of elements working in favour of and against the achievement of the goal of a new town. Consideration is given to the various forms of possible interpenetration between the towns, followed by a review of the prospects for what are now Gorizia and Nova Gorica becoming
a new town, to be called Gorizia/Gorica or Isonzopoli/Sočepolis. To this end predictive scenarios are constructed (present, after 5 years, 10 years and 15 years) based on three hypotheses of relations between the two current towns: that they remain separate, that they develop some degree of differentiated integration, that they join to become a new and “normal” town, that is the same as both their previous forms except for the constraints that may derive from the continued existence of a border between two sovereign states, despite its disactivation. Lastly, consideration is given to six possible final scenarios (at 2030), comprising an impossible new town, an over-ambitious scenario, an absolute negative scenario, a relative new town, a realistic block scenario, and an optimum new town. The probability of each scenario is assessed, as is their applicability to other twin towns.

**Twin Towns Which Tend to Become Joint Towns**

A twin town is a border town in which the border is a division but is also a factor which strengthens its identity.

Twin towns on borders experience the border in their daily lives with its advantages and disadvantages great and small, with kinship relations and friendships which cross the border, with relationship networks involving the structure and organisation of economic life (cross-border joint ventures, amalgamations and business co-optations) and the individual and informal sphere of cross-border shopping, holidays and commuting to work.

These factors amount to an interpenetration, something which is stronger in some relational areas and weaker in others. The more one of the towns, or both of them, develops to exploit the opportunities offered by the other, the more marked that interpenetration is. In such a case interpenetration (deriving from structural complementarity) clearly produces the enfeoffment of one town by the other. By contrast, it represents symmetrical development\(^1\) if interpenetration is the result of a desire to create unity between the two towns to be used towards the outside (interpenetration from atomistic complementarity). In other words there arises a **differentiated integration**\(^2\) for each sector—financial, commercial, associative, recreational, cultural and political.

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1. “Symmetrical development” is not meant to mean egalitarian reciprocity, but a common interest in pursuing shared developmental objectives.
2. On differentiated integration see the first chapter of this volume, in the section “The ‘positive face’ of borders and walls. Peace in fusion, peace in separation”.