🏆 *reviewed paper*

Integration of Inhabitants in Contemporary City

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1 ABSTRACT

The author considered question of being together in a complex, changing city. The shortage of places, favorable social contacts in some neighborhood was noticed. This can be related with equipment or limited in-between space in densely built-up areas. In such areas social life is sometimes very limited. Building over, cementing of spaces does not lead to integration. Attention was paid to difficulties in defining neighborhood in the contemporary world and a lack of distinct association between project and sense of community. It was shown, that spaces in-between through functions and facilities can correspond to different requirements of inhabitants, contribute to meetings between people, enrich experience. In the paper space isn't only understood as a sequence of succeeding spaces. It also presents consideration about network.

2 INTRODUCTION

These days integration encompasses activities aiming at the full participation of people and families in the life of a community, thus it refers to employment, appropriate income level and free access to goods and services. Social bonds are based e.g. on interests, work, activities, relationship, business, they are maintained irrespective of whether they are limited to local space or they cross these borders[1]. Taking into consideration the complexity of social bonds which is characteristic for open societies Christopher Alexander (1965) proves that with regard to the convenience of people and effective functioning of cities and their parts, it is more appropriate to design cities or their parts as semilattice structures in which some functions overlap and are shared.

Social ties may be connected with a place or not. The place was connected with traditional way of understanding of community. The idea of community of place[2] or place-based community joins the sense of community with the sense of place. *The most obvious feature of community of place is that people interact continually with each other in a variety of contexts such as work, sport and family as they go about their daily lives (Cheers & Luloff, 2001; Kaufman, 1985; Wilkinson, 1991)* [3]. The possible conviction that they have the right to exclude others as well as limitations related to stereotypes and established place identity resulting from the community concept, place and place community are the reason why they are criticised. An example of place communities are gated communities.

Some contemporary forms of social interaction, independent of place, are maintained thanks to communication networks, such as mobile phones, telex, TV or fast planes, etc.[4] The easiness with which we can sometimes reach very distant places influences the difficulty in defining a neighbourhood in the real world. *In contemporary life neighbourhood intimacy has broken down due to the development of complex networks of wide contacts which turn people living in the same house into strangers.*[5]

3 PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

As a result of dense distribution of buildings the space in-between is sometimes very limited, which influences the social life of the inhabitants of housing complexes. This refers, among others, to the following housing complexes in Wroclaw:

1. a fenced housing complex consisting of low multi-family development in Miłostowska St. (Fig. 1),

2. a complex of high (8-storey) buildings in Litewska St. (Fig. 2, 3),

3. quarter development near the main railway station in Wroclaw, 94, 96 J. Piłsudskiego St. (Fig. 3).

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[1] Bott E., *Family and Social Network*, London, Tavistock, 1957.
[2] Cheers B., Luloff A.E., *Rural Community Development*. In: *Rurality Bites: The Social and Environmental Transformation of Rural Australia*, Lockie S., Bourke L. (eds.), Pluto Press, Annandale 2001.
[3] Cheers B., *op. cit.*, p. 9, 10.
[4] Mikołajewska B., *Zjawisko wspólnoty*, The Lintons' Video Press, 2nd ed., New Haven, CT, USA 1999, p. 36.
[5] Mikołajewska B., *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Fig. 1. Housing complex in Wroclaw, Miłostowska St.

Fig. 2. Complex of buildings in Wroclaw, Litewska St.

Fig. 3. Quarter development in Wroclaw, 94, 96 J. Piłsudskiego St.

Building over and cementing of space does not lead to integration. In photos 1-3 one can also observe that a significant part of space between buildings is taken up by cars. Another visible problem is the possible deprivation of the youngest children of the possibility to play in direct neighbourhood of the place where they live and locking playgrounds. One more reason for "inanimate" in-between spaces is aversion to staying in low quality space, lack of order and dirt.

The above examples show that we cannot always expect in-between space which would meet our needs in the direct vicinity of our residence. Alternative green spaces earmarked for the collective life of inhabitants are parks, gardens or riversides available for everyone.

The attractiveness of functions, distance (time to reach the destination – a park, square, shop, services...), and in the case of pedestrian traffic also road convenience, related to safety, noise, air purity or the type and quality of road foundation, plays a significant role in creating and sustaining bonds between inhabitants and integration of housing complexes with the existing landscape.

4 INHABITANTS' COMMON PREMISES

Social needs related to group affiliation, coexistence with others, association belong to people's base needs.[6] „(...) Society is constituted by the community of goals (...) Without it, although we can make people live in neighbourhood, they will remain constantly isolated".[7] Common interests and needs referring to among others: collective services, education, feeling of safety and more or less mutual control make the basic ideas of community.

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[6] They belong to third category of base needs, behind physiological and safeties needs, according to Abraham Maslow's classification of pyramid of needs. Kwiatkowski K., *Kreacja, odtwarzanie, podtrzymywanie więzi społecznej w zespołach mieszkaniowych. Creation, reconstruction, sustaining social bonds in housing complexes*. In: Architecture et artibus, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Białostockiej, Białystok 2010, vol. 2, no. 1, p. 47.
[7] Disraeli wrote about this, in: *Sybilli*, Mikołajewska B., *Zjawisko wspólnoty*, The Lintons' Video Press, 2nd ed., New Haven, CT, USA 1999, p. 48.

Ebenezer Howard wanted to ensure favourable living conditions for the development of community by joining the best characteristics of the country and the city, by the idea of "garden cities", 1898.

The consolidation of neighbourhood by base needs and transport system ensuring pedestrian safety, especially children walking to school, was proposed by American planner Clarence-Arthur Perry (1872-1944) in 1923, he proposed a neighbourhood unit[8], a concept developed in a publication from 1929. The idea of a housing estates is derive from Perry's neighbourhood unit.

The assumption that neighbourhood units will unite inhabitants turned out to be wrong. We are not able to predict or fully control social behaviour. It was particularly clear in the 70's when as a result of mass development, in-between spaces in housing estates became places of territorial conflicts. Even if we respond to the needs of some environments, we may not influence their integration, as an example we can mention environments called "fugitives"[9] which perceive the surroundings as a limitation and that is why they want to leave them. This environments cannot create in a given place management strategies characteristic for them. They want to leave neighbourhood because they suffer in conflicts with dominating environments.

Due to the fact that common premises may favour collective life, however, they may also be a place of conflicts, there were two different views related to the design of common premises. The first view resulted from fear and threat potential of common premises, thus it recommended to avoid designing them, at the end of 19th c. it was represented by Georges Picot. The other stance supporting the opinion that inhabitants should have opportunities for social contact created by designing spaces in which they can spend time together (its representative was Emile Cheysson (1836-1910) and Le Corbusier).

The indicator of community ideal were Synnyside Gardens in Queens in the USA, built in 1924–28. The architects and planners of this development were Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright, and landscape architect was Marjorie Sewell Cautley. The project was inspired by English E. Howard and R. Unwin's garden-city movement. Inhabitants of Synnyside Gardens had private gardens at the foot of buildings which surrounded common use gardens and neighbourhood playgrounds. Common areas were not divided by road traffic. In the peripheries of neighbourhoods there were shops and garages.

A Polish example of a housing estates which is significant due the existence of an organised local community, is Żoliborz in Warsaw which was built in the interwar period. The housing estates design was ordered by the Warsaw Housing Association (Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa – WSM). It consisted of 13 colonies built with 2-3 buildings arranged around yards. The author of colonies I-III and V-VI was Brunon Zborowski, of colony VIII Jan Chmielewski and Juliusz Żakowski and of colony IV, VII and IX Stanisław and Barbara Brukalski.

Both in the case of Synnyside Gardens and Żoliborz housing estates the sense of community between inhabitants and between inhabitants and their residence was supported by the system of development with common yards where inhabitants were able to spend time together.

In the case of Żoliborz the facilities at the housing estates played a very important role.[10] There were a bath-swimming pool, a laundrette and a drying room, now they aren't needed because inhabitants had equipped their dwelling in bathrooms. Other social equipment of WSM encompassed a library with a reading room and a community room, a clinic, Turystyczna Kasa Oszczędności (savings association), a nursery school, Puppet Theatre "Baj", shops, a café (where no alcohol was sold), a canteen, a post office, a pharmacy, furniture, radio and locksmith's workshops, firewood shop, gardening centre. There were developed many other initiatives, their purpose was involving inhabitants in taking care of the housing estates. The inhabitants organised annual money collections to buy plants used to decorate greens in their yards, they also organised "gardens and greens beauty contest" which rewarded those of the inhabitants whose balconies were beautifully decorated with flowers.[11] Gardening in yards (planting flowers and trees) taking care of gardens located under windows strengthened the bonds between the inhabitants of particular colonies in Żoliborz,

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[8] In sociology the term of neighbor's unit organized Robert Ezra Park (1864-1944) in 1915.

[9] Musterd S., *The Spatial Dimensions of Urban Social Exclusion and Integration, The Case of Berlin, Germany,* ed. S. Musterd, URBEX Series, no. 11, Amsterdam 2001.

[10] Majewski J.S., *Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa*, 2002-04-02. Available from http://miasta.gazeta.pl/warszawa/1,34880,742608.html.

[11] Perzanowska M., *Architektura partycypacyjna na osiedlu WSM w latach przedwojennych*. Available from http://www.sztukakrajobrazu.pl/perzanowska.htm.

they supported integration between generations, increased the sense of security, being together in the community and place affiliation.

Some elements which play today an important identification and culture creating role are as follows: architectural buildings, architectural elements, artistic events, advertisements, artistic elements. Social facilities, such as community centres, can enable activities undesired by neighbours, e.g. parties, DIY.[12]

Between inhabitants there may exist bonds resulting from the sense of tradition and belonging to the place where we live. The identification of inhabitants with city space is influenced by:

space characteristics and properties – in the case of Synnyside Gardens, the identity of inhabitants with their residence was favoured by, among others, human scale, architectural harmony thanks to the universal use of brick, repeated details of continuous roof lines and low area development percentage (28%) which was possible in this location[13],

- space anonymity reduction by limiting the number of inhabitants,
- characteristics and types of functions,
- values in clear forms (connected with e.g. *"religious cult; ascribed to the place by literary fiction; philosophical ideas or ideologies; symbolism of geometrical figures, symbolic objects; customs, traditions, ceremonies; awareness of an unusual event; need to commemorate something"* [14]),
- forming development through symbolic values, e.g. clear housing complex borders,
- maintenance (taking care) of the area,
- usability standard,
- aesthetics.

Social activities, i.e. the ones which depend on the presence of others at the same place (e.g. children's games, greetings and conversations, collective activities, passive contacts – looking at people and listening to them) are influenced by space quality. It was indicated by Jan Gehl[15], a Danish architect. According to him social activities are favoured by the creation of conditions for necessary and optional activities – participation in the latter type depends on our will, e.g.: walking, standing, sitting and sunbathing.

The variety of the functions of city spaces contributes to the increase of the frequency and intensity of its use and may be advantageous for the development of social life. It is a also important to create optimum density and not to burden the space excessively with facilities. The presence of more than one function, regardless of its localisation in the neighbourhood, may contribute to synergy. It is favoured by accessibility for pedestrian traffic which facilitates settling numerous matters in a short time, without the necessity to drive. As a result street activity is increased and this may improve safety. The necessary complexity of a city was indicated by, among others, Jane Jacobs (1961), members of Team X, Nikos A. Salingaros (2000). Approximation of functions and their variety in housing areas are postulated, among others, by the rules of new urbanism and smart development strategies. The right selection of functions means considering economic, social and environmental aspects.

It needs be mentioned that some city spaces should have high variety and others should not. For example in green spaces people look not only for cultured activities and opportunities to meet other people but also seclusion. Both types of parks are required, a "quiet" one and one for sport games. Some services[16] are qualified to be grouped in mutual neighbourhood and to be placed near transport routes, these are, for example, various types of shops, petrol stations, craftsmen's workshops, most of entertainment and culture

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[12] Kwiatkowski K., *op. cit.*, p. 46-52.

[13] Stein C.S., "Toward New Towns for America". In: *The Town Planning Review*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1949, p. 203-282, citation p. 215. In: Sonne W., *Dwelling in the Metropolis: Reformed Urban Blocks 1890 – 1940*, Project Report. University of Strathclyde and Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), United Kingdom, Glasgow 2005, p. 79.

[14] Dąbrowska-Budziło K., *Wartości niematerialne krajobrazu kulturowego*. In: *Architektura krajobrazu a planowanie przestrzenne*, edited by Krystyna Pawłowska, Politechnika Krakowska, Kraków 2001, p. 256–265.

[15] Gehl J., *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, Arkitektens Forlag, Copenhagen 1996.

[16] Zipser T., *Struktura łańcuchowo-trójkątna miasta nowoczesnego*, Stadium teoretyczne, Part I, in: Architektura VI, Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Wrocławskiej no. 81, Wrocław 1964, p. 14–15.

related facilities, railway stations, etc. However services[17] which function best in isolation from other services and do not require, and even cannot stand, the vicinity of traffic encompass schools, nursery schools, nurseries, sometimes some facilities related to culture and recreation.

5   THE ROLE OF IN-BETWEEN SPACE AS INTEGRATION SPACE

Social integration should not adversely affect the privacy, security, acoustic protection of inhabitants in private domain. All these factors are related to space development.

Then question how the real advantages of living in a community and privacy should be ensured was examined by Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander (1963). They suggested a model in which the public and private domains are independent units which must function separately and must be connected to their counterparts through semi-public and semi-private domains. In this model public and private domains are isolated with a barrier and passage between two subsequent domains is possible through passage points. Chermayeff and Alexander's model may be used in various scales (a house, housing estates or city). The result of this model is city anatomy built of numerous hierarchies of clearly articulated domains[18] which allows to respond to various levels of social life.

Defining the space status, clarity of the character of private or semi-privates, semi-public or public domains helps to respect rules and usability norms of given space.[19] It makes that a person recognize who this space is meant for, who is responsible for it and who controls it. It may influence the sense of joint responsibility of inhabitants for the house surroundings, security improvement and appearance of the space.

An important characteristic which is related to the integration of inhabitants, except privacy, is security. The Defensible Space Theory was described by Oscar Newman[20] (1972) who developed it at the beginning of the 70's of 20th c. In the 90's some changes were introduced to this theory, however, Newman's elementary rules are still used in design. Newman proposed a spatial hierarchy of housing areas which allows inhabitants to control the area around their houses. This hierarchy was based on public, semi-public, semi-private and private space. According to Newman an area is safer if people consider it their own and when have a sense of responsibility for a given fragment of community area. This is why this theory is based on physical elements and community. Lack of inhabitants' interest in the area surrounding their houses may have negative effect on security.[21]

A way to ensure a comfortable neighbourhood sometimes is limiting access for people from outside to a housing complex. Such complexes are called gated communities[22]. Among the prerequisite for them, there is a sense of community, exclusion, privatisation, stability, structure of the housing market. The word "community" does not always reflect the existence of bonds between the inhabitants of a "gated" community. Other negative effects are related to the establishment of gated communities result from barricaded streets. This results in inconveniences for motorcyclists, sales representatives and emergency vehicles (ambulances, fire brigade, etc.). Barricading introduces also a new street hierarchy in a housing

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[17] Zipser T., *op. cit.*, p. 14–15.

[18] Urban hierarchy of areas or realms for community and privacy, according to them, is divided on 6 urban realms: urban-public, urban-semi-public, group-public, group-private, family-private and individual-private. Chermayeff S. & Alexander Ch., *Community and privacy; toward a new architecture of humanism*, Doubleday, New York 1963, p. 121, 122.

[19] The marking of clear territorial distinctions (private, semi-private, semipublic, public character) recommends inter alia Herman Hertzberger. Dehan P., *Qualité architecturale et innovation. I. Méthode d'évaluation*, Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture, Paris, March 1999, p. 60.

[20] Newman O., *Defensible Space: People and Design in the Violent City*, Architectural Press, London 1972. Newman O., *Design Guidelines for Creating Defensible Space*, National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Washington 1975.

[21] *Wilson (1978) pointed out that the conventional spatial order of residential areas contributed to more defensible space rather than the spatial hierarchy proposed by Newman. He argued that such semi-private and semi-public space around residential area Gould be easily undermined if not well controlled.* Wilson E.O., *On Human Nature*, Mass, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1978. In: Seok-Heon L., *Spatial order and sense of community in high-rise apartment developments in Bundang, the metropolitan area of Seoul, Korea*, The University of New South Wales, Faculty of Build Environment, masters, Sydney 2005, p. 22.

[22] Ellin N. (ed.), *Architecture of Fear*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 1997.

area. It means that in areas leading to housing complexes may be increased traffic and this in effect will decrease the living conditions of inhabitants.

An attempt to combine a socially uniform neighbourhood with social integration need is the so called active edge concept[23]. The entrance area to a housing complex may play the role of an area integrating various neighbourhoods. This concept assumes locating services and public utility places on the edge of housing complexes to transform the edges into interactions zones between various groups.

The shape of the in-between space depends on the implications of various elements related to this issue. Chermayeff and Alexander[24] indicated 7 main constituents of the in-between space, which is called the connection between a flat and a city, to provide access, ensure privacy and acoustic protection. They did not precisely define the in-between space but only indicated the constituent elements of the problem which may be referred to the particular conditions of a given place. The problem constituents distinguished by Chermayeff and Alexander are related to ensuring access, privacy, security and acoustic protection. Inhabitants needs related to privacy protection and security are taken into account in the design of an entrance to a building, service, pedestrian zones which separate private space from the street. By limiting access to a housing complex one can influence privacy protection and inhabitants' security. However, if the needs related to security and privacy, such as ensuring one-way visibility in the access area, appropriate lighting, lack of sudden contrasts, clear borders between private, public pedestrian and semi-public domains are satisfied, the inhabitants will not necessarily feel the need to have additional protection, e.g. locked gates.

The integration of inhabitants in their community space is supported by the separation of housing complex from negative effects of noise sources and environment pollution, e.g. heavy traffic, industrial plants. The following ways of acoustic protection are distinguished: place planning, construction, barriers, earth banks, walls and fences, greens (trees) or combinations of these techniques. The methods differ in the effectiveness of noise reduction, general effectiveness and costs, which may depend on the stage of investment implementation.

The ways of shaping public space which are used for the purpose of liveliness communities postulate general rules of new urbanism. According to these rules a design should combine well with the surroundings, protect open space, exclude locked gates, lack of pavements, it recommends avoiding mono-functional areas. In the scheme of a new-urbanism city, the neighbourhood centres are subordinate to the idea of social integration. "Neighbourhood" is an area whose optimum size is a quarter of a mile (about 0.5 km) form the centre to the edge. Most people can cover this distance on foot within 5 min. The centre should be a public space, e.g. a square, a green area or an important crossroad. The crossroad of important transport arteries, which in Perry's concept of a "neighbourhood unit" was near its border, in the new urbanism concept may play the role of the "neighbourhood" centre. To make a neighbourhood encourage pedestrian traffic, there must be a lot of places satisfying everyday needs. This is why in the neighbourhood there should be buildings for various purposes, e.g. housing buildings, shops, jobs, schools, temples and recreation spaces. To promote pedestrian traffic new urbanism recommends avoiding designs with easy car access. This recommendation is sometimes criticised because it does not meet expectations related to easy car access.[25]

Meeting community goals, i.e. functions access, is influenced by the possibilities offered by a place and economic life of investors. The concept of "smart growth" suggests relative functions distribution within a neighbourhood.[26] According to this concept, time shorter than 5 min. is perfect to reach public transport (bus, tram, etc.) or parks in the area encompassed by the project or the adjacent area. The research on the time to reach public utility places and public transport in particular parts of Wroclaw are collected in Eugeniusz Bagiński's[27] work and indicate that most services and public transport means is accessible for the inhabitants of Wroclaw within time which is shorter than the 5 minutes suggested by the "smart growth" concept. Regardless of this the inhabitants still expect further shortening of the distance to these places. Individual assessments of distance influence the decision on migration, the choice the destination and route. Distance

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[23] Sennett R., *The Search for the Place in the World*. In: N. Ellin (ed.), *op. cit*., p. 68.

[24] Chermayeff S. & Alexander Ch., *op. cit.*, p. 161-176.

[25] O'Toole R., *A Critique of Neotraditionalism*. Available from http://www.ti.org/neotrad.html.

[26] Fleissig W., Jacobsen V., *Smart Scorecard For Development Projects*, Congress for New Urbanism and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, January 2002. Available from http://www.cnu.org/cnu_reports/Scorecard_exp.pdf.

[27] Bagiński E., *Wrocław w opinii swoich mieszkańców*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Wrocławskiej, Wrocław 1998, p. 91–95, 98.

assessment does not always reflect the real distance because of the phenomenon[28] of real distance deformation in space.

Individual preferences, a large selection of social facilities, e.g. libraries, interest clubs, clinics, their accessibility, all influence the choice. In this case "distance" becomes a less important factor. Further connections may turn out to be more important for the inhabitants if we consider the connections between home and work in comparison with home and school or home and shop located in close neighbourhood.

Nowadays one can observe a change in the perception of a city, areas and their borders, including the perception of areas in the background of a city and their roles. As a result of adding new connections one can reach even distant places within a short time. Thanks to the possibility of crossing barriers the borderline becomes unclear. In the city scale, a borderline for a particular person may be the place where they get out of a car. A new phenomenon related to city boundaries, which so far has not influenced the perceptible boundaries of housing complexes, is the appearance of normal roads in city tunnels (they are not motorways) connecting various parts of the city. For example, if we go through a tunnel under the city, we have no idea what is above us. The tunnel suddenly leads us out in a different place. The Internet is a good, symbolical example of the fact that the traditional distance is no longer the same, e.g. the distance covered by a letter which must be put in a letterbox, next it covers the distance to the addressee by train or by plane. The Internet makes it possible to cover long distances by allowing us to communicate with people and get to know new places.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The elementary condition of a well-functioning city (a lively city) is high organisational complexity which is partly dependent on the variety of forms and functions of urban areas. Thanks to their functions and facilities, urban areas may respond to various needs of inhabitants, contribute to meetings between people, enrich experience and strengthen significance. By promoting elements of "new cultures" in large agglomerations, they may emphasise different identities of inhabitants. Given the spatial dispersion trends in large agglomerations, smaller cities and rural areas, they may reflect particular characteristics of the place and local community and thus express its identity.

Easy access to distant places is the reason for a change in the significance of particular space fragments – in human awareness the hierarchical system is more important than the distance. As a result of adding new transport layers, the perception of city space changes.

The real integration of people takes place in human consciousness. Growing disproportions between the rich and the poor, which accompany integration processes, are the reason why emotional involvement is necessary to form opened in-between spaces favourable social contacts, because such involvement gives strong motivation to act to support and sustain the achieved integration.[29]

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[28] Tobler W., *Geographic area and map projections*, Geographical Review, 1963, p. 53.

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