

The city in the times of integration. The Warsaw's case

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Abstract

Integration of the Polish state brought about a partial disintegration of the inter-war Warsaw, but the city established its identity anew as a fighting city, a special city, a city with a character. European integration makes contemporary Warsaw similar to other cities, washing away its individual distinctive features and disintegrating its inner space. Warsaw as the capital city was the centre of political life of the country, where the processes of unification of the large political parties, trade organisations and the cultural and educational institutions concentrated.

Key words: national/international integration, disintegration, city space, Warsaw

Introduction

Integration, or putting things together so as to form a whole, is the process of forming an entirety out of its parts or of inclusion of an element into an entirety (Kopaliński, 1971, p. 337), from the Latin *integratio* – renewal. The examples of the process of integration can be found on the country-wide level, when the provinces, regions or districts that have not been fully incorporated, or the arbitrarily separated, particular parts of the territory, start to function administratively in common. They can also be found on the international level, when individual countries, while preserving sovereignty of decisions and independence of action in certain domains, integrate their potentials within the framework of a supra-national agreement, concerning the other issues.

At the level of international integration it is usual that the fully competent partners are the metropolises, large towns, capitals (in view of their political, social and economic capital), and not the entire countries. It would therefore appear that these towns are first of all the beneficiaries of the integration processes. It is, however, certain that such towns are the focus of the processes: the symptoms of integration are quite well visible inside the town. Moreover, the internal or international integration may lead to separation of the town from the surrounding region, as well as to disintegration within the town itself. The values, qualities, standards or profits associated with integration – acquired and implemented within the particular sectors – may contribute to the loss of other values in other sectors (for instance – economy vs. physiognomy of a town).

The integration process, considered at various levels (regional, national, international) and with respect to various aspects (Fig.1), clearly appearing in the space of large towns and in behaviour of urban societies, should not be unequivocally evaluated in the categories of good-bad, black-white. The national or international integration must, of course, give rise (in the effect of undertaking of any sort of collaboration) to either urban integration or disintegration, or may have a neutral influence. It is rare, though, that it be only a negative or positive impact.

Does a town function differently in the time of integration (be it international or national one) than in the "non-integration" periods? Does (and if so – why?) the phenomenon of national integration bring about disintegration at the urban level? Are (and if so – which?) any of the inherent urban values and qualities being lost at the advantage of (which?) values and qualities associated with integration? The present paper attempts to provide answers to these questions (in the spirit of the human geography – its methodological attitude and terminology concerned).

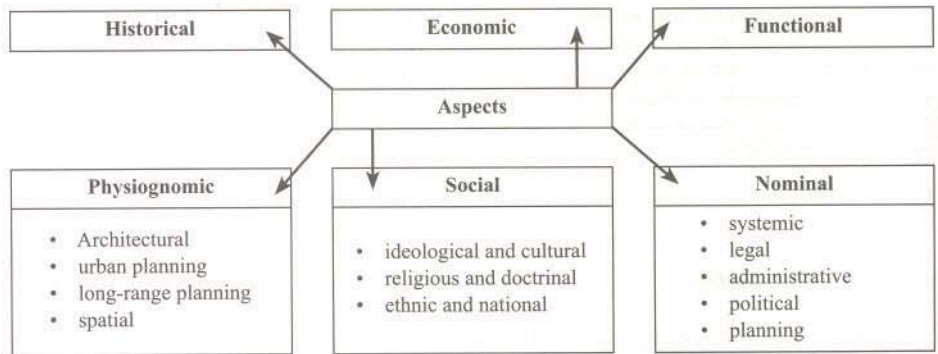


Fig. 1 Selected aspects of the national-international integration appearing in a town

Before passing over to the proper contents of the present report, we must make more precise the temporal aspect of the notion of integration in the context of Poland and Warsaw. First of all, integration ought not be understood as an event, a one-time action, but as a long-term process. In the case of the Polish state the process of national integration encompassed the period 1914–1939 (that is – until the instant of the outbreak of the World War II, when the effort of integrating the Polish lands was put to waste), although the formal act of integration took place in the years 1918–1919. On the other hand, the process of international integration started for Poland in 1989 and lasts without a break until today, although the formal integration would have to be placed in the years 2002–2004.

Hence, the selected aspects and properties of the two integration processes, as appearing in Warsaw, the capital of Poland, will be presented in two time instants: how the inter-war Warsaw reacted to the national integration taking place after 1914 (1918) and what was its significance for the success of this integration, and – how contemporary Warsaw reacts to the processes of integration and unification with other countries of the Old Continent at the turn of the 21st century, account being taken of

the incidental differences in the political positions of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation? However... we can consider that the process of integration of Europe, despite the yet former historical prerequisites, continues since the beginning of the 20th century, with the break of the World War II. For many countries, however, including Poland, the continuity of integration was interrupted for a longer time, and the very phenomenon of integration is connected, paradoxically, with independence and sovereignty. The Treaty of Versailles of 1919 made it possible (after 120 years of formal non-existence) to integrate Polish lands, having had been until World War I under occupation by the three partitioning powers (Russia, Prussia and Austria). In 1939 the independent existence of the state organism of the 2nd Polish Commonwealth was annulled by the World War II, and then, after 1945, the Yalta order sanctioned the integration (!) of the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe in the framework of the Soviet Empire. Following 1989 these countries regained political and economic independence, and their democratically chosen authorities obtained the opportunity of dialogue with the leaders of the already united Western Europe on the potentially complete unity of the Old Continent... As we can see, integration can have several meanings.

Historical conditioning of the integration of the Polish state after the World War I (an outline)

The regaining of independence by Poland (and by several other countries of Central and Eastern Europe) was due to a highly improbable course of events. A Polish historian, Andrzej Garlicki (1996, p. 6) so describes the beginning of the World War I: *“On June 28th [1914] the successor to the Austrian-Hungarian throne, archduke Francis Ferdinand was killed in Sarajevo by the Serb revolutionaries. A month later Austria-Hungary waged war on Serbia. On August 1st Germany proclaimed war on Russia, the supporter of Serbia, and on August 3rd – on France, linked by a military alliance with Russia. German troops invaded Belgium, breaking its neutrality. On August 4th United Kingdom proclaimed war against Germany, and on August 6th the state of war was proclaimed between Austria-Hungary and Russia.”* The three powers occupying until then Polish lands faced each other on the battleground, which was constituted to a large extent by the territory of the ancient Polish Commonwealth. Hence, it appeared necessary for each of the fighting powers to neutralise or to mobilise the Polish opinion. The bidding with the proclamations and promises of integration of the Polish state, first with a limited autonomy, and thereafter of a fully sovereign one, the bidding concerning, after all, the independence of Poland, started soon. The Russian Crown Prince Nicolas Nicolayevich, the Russian Prime Minister Ivan Goremykin, the General Governors of Warsaw and Lublin, and finally the tsar Nicolas II, and even the President of the then yet neutral United States, Woodrow Wilson, or the Russian Petrograd Council of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Delegates – all the significant players of international politics (except for France and England, having had considered until a certain moment the Polish question to be the internal issue of Russia) promised Poles the complete (or partial) independence with respect to the state and international

aspects – for the sake of their own, particular political and military interests, for the sake of preservation of an own influential position in the game for Europe, or for the sake of the idealist doctrines of freedom.

The leader of the national wing in Polish politics, Roman Dmowski, was aware that the reconstruction of Poland within the historical boundaries of the first Commonwealth of 1772 was not possible. He was the author of the territorial incorporative concept, which assumed to an extent an optimum vision of the future Polish state, put together of the Austrian part (Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia), the Russian part (the so-called Polish Kingdom and other selected governorships of the then Western Russia), and the Prussian part (the land of Poznań, Western Prussia with Gdańsk, Upper Silesia and the southern belt of East Prussia). Yet, the disintegrating forces in Europe were also on the move – both at the level of the nations standing on the doorstep of state-oriented self-identification (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians), which amounted to a threat of conflict with the Poles, and in the entire tsarist Russia, where the national and ethnic diversity would lead to delimitation of the natural, ethnic course of boundaries.

Finally, the year 1919 came and the peace conference in Versailles. The course of the borders of the second Polish Commonwealth was determined, the Free City of Gdańsk was established, and the plebiscites were to be carried out in Varmia and Masuria and in Upper Silesia, meant to determine the statehood of the local populations through their voting. The decisions of the Treaty of Versailles and the results of negotiations of the Polish delegation were received negatively in Poland (Garlicki, 1996, pp. 7–95).

What was the economic and social situation of the territories of the three parts of Poland, occupied by the respective powers? Very different. The economic stagnation of small towns, the backwardness and overpopulation of the rural areas, and a slow development of industry accompanied in the Austrian Galicia a relatively strong autonomy and cultural as well as educational and political freedom. On the other hand, the former Prussian part had been characterised by the lack of autonomy, but a relatively well-off countryside and developed industry. On the territory of the Russian part the economy fared much better than the civic and political freedoms.

These disproportions between the former occupied parts in the domains of economy, politics, education, law, administration or transport (one could speak of a spatial continuity only in the domain of culture) was amplified by the civilisation gap between Warsaw (which, referred to at that time as the “Paris of the East” or “Paris of the North”, was not much behind the western European metropolises) and the Polish small towns and villages. This was not advantageous for the integration of the country (Garlicki, 1996, pp. 113–122).

Selected issues related to integration

Before taking a closer look at the concrete instances of influence exerted by integration on the city, it is worth considering the general problems that the inter-war Warsaw had to face and the ones that must be resolved in contemporary Warsaw.

Warsaw in the inter-war period

In the years 1914–1939 Warsaw seemed to be an historically uprooted town, the capital of a country lagging in the development of civilisation, still having the character of a provincial town of the Russian empire, and appeared like – in the words of Stefan Żeromski (1925) – “*a provincial burgh of the tsarist satrapy*”. Enclosed in the circle of the Russian forts, lacking more important land reserves, deprived of a longer time period for the realisation of plans and construction projects, due to the outbreak of the World War II, it was also haunted by the idleness of the town authorities, caused by the double authority over a certain period of time (the commissary and the president of town). All this constituted serious obstacles in the urban development of Warsaw. The town featured striking urban contrasts (the differences between the downtown and the proletarian estates of the suburban zone), with care primarily taken of the monumental public structures (no wonder, given the period of national integration), and not of housing. Drastic examples are provided by the “wild” construction developments in Góra Młocińska, Buraków, Wawrzyszew, Targówek, Rakowiec and Okęcie. In these quarters of the city the shanty-towns appeared, made up of primitive wood and clay huts and shelters. This state of affairs ought to be associated with overpopulation and housing dearth. This was the time of the mass, economically motivated, returns of the former inhabitants of Warsaw from Russia and Germany, where they had been evacuated from the city.

During the period of national integration a gradual disintegration of the city started to become visible on the architectonic, urban planning, social (social contrasts and separations), professional, cultural, national, denominational, etc., planes. This diversity may to a certain extent be justified by the freedom of choice and of preferences, which had been so sharply lacking for more than a century.

Despite the fact that its industrial potential was not reconstructed, Warsaw developed dynamically, which to a certain extent slowed down the urbanisation processes of the then province of Warsaw. This was yet compounded by the problems associated with the integration of the Warsaw's industry, crafts, trade and finance with the national market (Drozdowski 1973, pp. 12–45).

Contemporary Warsaw

Numerous specialists in the field have the impression that the economic transformation of Warsaw in the 1990s took place at the cost of the rest of the country (see, e.g., Nowosielska, 2002). The isolation and separation of Warsaw with respect to the surrounding region of Masovia make it necessary to activate this region, which participates in the international exchange to the lowest extent across Poland; the ring surrounding the capital is hidden in the economic shadow of Warsaw (Komornicki, 2002; Nowosielska, 2002).

The weakness of the system of spatial planning and spatial economy in Warsaw causes that the construction projects are in their majority not regulated through detailed plans, while location of wastewater treatment plants, waste combustion plants and landfills, or tracing of the motorways turn out to constitute insurmountable problems (Chmielewski, 2002).

Besides, one can notice in the present-day Warsaw lack of association of people with their places, lack of stability, progressing alienation of individuals, and the simultaneous social disintegration (a change in the population structure of the town), as well as increasingly meaningless urban structure, social structure and toponymy, altogether hampering the development of the spatial order and adding to chaos in urban space (Rykiel, 2002; Korcelli, 2002). Very much to the point here is the remark by Maciej Nowakowski, the President of the Warsaw Chapter of the Polish Association of Urban Planners (2002, p.11): “*Warsaw is being constructed as a very vast, and therefore increasingly costly, town, less and less comfortable and less and less healthy*”.

Selected features and consequences of integration of the Polish state in the inter-war Warsaw (1914–1939) – urban symptoms of the process of integration of Poland

The general (neutral) motives

The physiognomic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – increase of the administrative area of the town – new phenomena in the architecture of Warsaw, 1918–1949: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-operative housing construction (estates of the clerks, officers, journalists, workers) with a differentiated standard, scale of buildings and architectural style; garden-towns for the middle class (Sadyba, Żoliborz, Saska Kępa); enclosed housing estates realised on the basis of the leftist social programs of “minimum residence” (the colonies of the Warsaw Housing Co-operative in Żoliborz); – dominating styles – directions – currents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic neo-classicism, national / manor / local style, expressionism and semi-modernism, modernist neoclassicism, avant-garde and functionalism (see Figures); – designs for the monumental buildings on the upper edge of the Vistula Valley slope in Warsaw and, in contrast, relatively low-rise buildings within the riverside quarter of Powiśle (amplification of the landscape features); – plans for the cutting through of the Saxon Garden with the Marszałkowska street, or for the boulevards along Vistula river.
The social aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – increased population number (demographic compensation) and increased population density
The nominal aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Warsaw became a separate unit of state administration with the rights of a province (1918); – administrative division: four urban counties (Downtown-Warsaw, Northern Warsaw, Southern Warsaw and Warsaw-Praga); – a design for the plan for Warsaw in its new, extended boundaries (1916): four construction zones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – compact structures, mixed structures (housing, trade, industry), open (loose) and industrial developments (mainly the quarters of Wola and Praga); – the regulatory plan: pushing away from the downtown of the housing functions to the advantage of the representative and service functions.

Author's elaboration on the basis of: Drozdowski (1973), Garlicki (1996), Leśniakowska (2002), Martyn (1999) and own research



Fig. 2 Stefan Batory High School (moderate modernism coupled with the national style), Myśliwiecka street.



Fig. 3 Main Post Office (semi-modernism with the elements of neo-classicism), Świętokrzyska street

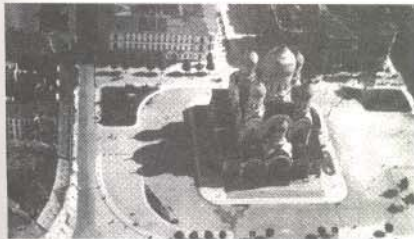


Fig. 4 Saxon square with the Orthodox church (1921) [Art Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences]



Fig. 5 The Metropolitan office building (construction in 2001–2003, design by Sir N. Foster)

The integrative / integrating motives

The physiognomic aspect

- incorporation of the suburbs in 1916;
- renovation of historical buildings within the Old City;
- urban-planning integration of suburbs with the city core;
- reconstruction and renovation of the palaces for the governmental administration (including the Palace of the Council of Ministers – nowadays the Presidential Palace, the Primate's Palace, the Raczynski Palace);
- construction of the representative buildings (including the Hotel and the Room of the Diet, and the Main Trade School);
- years 1935–1939: the most intensive urban development of Warsaw (e.g. tracing of the Niepodległości Avenue, the link between Mokotów and the downtown).

The social aspect

- overcoming of the remains of the partition time nationalist prejudices with respect to ethnic minorities, the prejudices purposefully incited by the partitioning powers (numerous groups of Jewish population, living in the custom and religious ghetto, were apprehensive with regard to the re-establishment of the Polish state).

The historical aspect

- renovation of historical buildings in the Old City;
- regaining of the status of the capital of independent Poland.

The economic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – convenient railway, road, air and telecommunication connections with other economic centres at home and abroad; – low shares of the foreign capital in the economic organisations in Warsaw (which was advantageous for the integrative role in the national economy).
The functional aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the quarter of Ochota of the 1920s and 1930s: the wooden summer barracks of the Russian army, located in a dirty and neglected suburb, were replaced by a number of new streets and squares with imposing buildings, both public and private.
The nominal aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – opening in 1915 of the University of Warsaw and of the Warsaw University of Technology; – renovation of historical buildings in the Old City of Warsaw.

Author's elaboration on the basis of: Drozdowski (1973), Garlicki (1996), Leśniakowska (2002), Martyn (1999) and own research

The disintegrative / disintegrating motives

The physiognomic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – intra-community integration: emergence of the new housing estates: the Officers' Żoliborz, the Clerks' Żoliborz, the Journalists' Żoliborz; – the Jewish quarter.
The social aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the social diversity of the capital (a mixture of dialects and customs); – increasing percentage share of Jews (legal limitations, influence of territorial links, the Jewish quarter, the religious commune); – discrimination of the Jewish intelligentsia (lack of access to the state and self-governmental institutions); – denominational diversity of the capital (Jews, Protestants, Orthodox Christians – various degrees of assimilation – various degrees of social assimilation! ...); – emergence of the ghettos of intelligentsia; – cultural distances (economic and social as well as national structure).
The economic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – centralisation of the economic life caused and amplified the distance separating the capital from province.
The nominal aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – frequent protests of the European democratic opinion against the "strange" position of Warsaw: war in the East, the Brest' arrests, the Bereza camp, the political program of the National Unification Party (OZN), the anti-Lithuanian campaign.

Author's elaboration on the basis of: Drozdowski (1973), Garlicki (1996), Leśniakowska (2002), Martyn (1999) and own research

Selected features and consequences of the European integration in contemporary Warsaw (since 1989) – urban symptoms of the process of unification of Europe

The general (neutral) motives

The physiognomic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the general features of the architecture of Warsaw after 1989: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the rapid increase of the number and volume of construction projects; the gradual transformation of the town into a European metropolis: new seats of banks, financial and insurance institutions, supermarkets, offices, travel bureaus, hotels; new architecture, mainly of the late modernist and high-tech character (with post-modernist elements), based upon new technologies, with simultaneous return to the traditional technologies and noble materials (Fig. 5); attempts of reconstruction of the old urban tissue (the return to the idea of the street and the quarter-like urban forms); the differentiation of the styles and standards of the housing architecture (a new type of a small house-settlement or a settlement-fortress); – disappearance of the bland expressionless state shops; – individual character of the pumping stations; – appearance of pubs; – emergence of the hyper-markets: the cities in city... – changes in the urban toponymy; – omnipresence of advertisings (frequently in English language) – extended street corridors (development of car transport and traffic).
The social aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – mental integration / individualisation.
The historical aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – changes in the names of streets, squares, structures; – demolition of monuments associated with the communist system.
The economic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – concentration of capital and foreign trade: increase of the share of foreign property; – high intensity of investment outlays; – multifunctional character of the capital's economy; – location on the line of the transport routes most charged with the Polish foreign trade (directions: East and West), including, in particular, the central parallel corridor stretching from The Netherlands to Moscow; – progressing concentration of exports and imports in the agglomeration of Warsaw; – concentration of the large service companies; – appearance of the hyper-markets; – expansion of the foreign investors in the hotel branch (e.g. the Holiday Inn Hotel, the Warsaw Marriott Hotel).
The functional aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – repetition of the course of processes having taken place earlier in the western towns (concentration of services in the city core, housing estates within the peripheries); – non-incident location of the shopping malls (in the peripheries of town): large population potential coupled with poor service infrastructure of the estates located far away from the centre of the city; – mass culture facilities (like cinemas), mass trade and business – located outside of the city core.

The nominal aspect

- lack of law on re-privatisation of the land in Warsaw;
- changes in the urban toponymy.

Author's elaboration on the basis of: Chmielewski (2002), Jarosz (2002), Komornicki (2002), Korcelli (2002), Kowalczyk (2002), Leśniakowska (2000, 2002), Nowosielska (2002), Rykiel (2002), as well as own research

The integrative / integrating motives

The physiognomic aspect

- modernisation (by the British Forte Plc.) of the historical hotel "Bristol";
- appearance of the vast business and financial centre (in the Downtown and the quarter of Wola) – the perspective of establishment of a cluster of five- and four-star hotels;
- change of the character of the outer zone of Warsaw from housing and farming to the multi-functional (economic hinterland of the town: production-storage-construction functions as well as housing and leisure).

The social aspect

- emphatic character of the housing estates, separation from the rest of town (friendliness);
- formation of the social groups in various territorial configuration and for the attainment of various objectives and programmes (like, for instance, investment projects, order and cleanliness, protection and safeguarding systems);
- large inflow of migrants to Warsaw (from the whole of Poland);
- appearance of the shopping malls (integration of objectives and needs);
- appearance of the outdoor cafés (functioning almost around the clock): social space;
- facilities for the handicapped – the requirements of the European Union (lifts, ramps, handles, broadened entrances, lowered floors in the busses, special sidewalk surfaces, sound signalisation, etc.).

The economic aspect

- wide network of connections between the enterprises;
- higher degree of privatisation of the metropolitan economy;
- changes in the structure of economy: increase of the share of the service sector in the employment structure and in the number of firms;
- mass appearance of new companies (progressing specialisation; increased number of businesses);
- concentration of employment – increase of the number of employed;
- appearance of the shopping malls (integration of the possibility of satisfying various needs in one place).

The functional aspect

- increased number of the non-public (private) university-level schools;
- hyper-markets and shopping malls as an important town-forming element (rationalisation of land economy);
- opening of the first subway line (the N-S direction).

Author's elaboration on the basis of: Chmielewski (2002), Jarosz (2002), Komornicki (2002), Korcelli (2002), Kowalczyk (2002), Leśniakowska (2000, 2002), Nowosielska (2002), Rykiel (2002) and own research

The disintegrative / disintegrating motives

The physiognomic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- individualisation of apartments, housing buildings, structures, estates;- lack of taste of the "competing" buildings emerging in haphazard locations (an expression of more general social phenomena);- advertising in every possible manner (the omnipresence of promotion and advertising): the large-scale ads and billboards, on collision course with architecture and greenery;- the secondary role of squares (often reduced to pure functionality): transport nodes (Bankowy sq., Unii Lubelskiej sq., Zbawiciela sq., Na Rozdrożu sq., Trzech Krzyży sq., Politechniki sq.), parking lots (Teatralny sq., Defilad sq., Powstańców Warszawy sq.), green areas (Kraśińskich sq., Dąbrowskiego sq., Grzybowski sq.), hard-to-define open spaces (Piłsudskiego sq., Mirowski sq.); and exceptions: the Old Town and New Town Market Squares, Konstytucji sq., Zamkowy sq.;- collapse of industry in Warsaw and inflow of commercial foreign investments (the former industrial and warehousing as well as undeveloped areas within the urban periphery became attractive locations for office space, supermarkets, wholesale outlets and housing estates);- narrowing down of the open space green belts;- filling in of the estate spaces with new buildings;- isolated estates with the horizontal versions of the blocks from the 1970s.
The social aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- lack of ties linking people with their places / lack of stability;- disintegration of the societies / alienation of individuals;- counter-functional delimitation of the administrative quarters (not satisfying the need of closeness);- individualisation of apartments, residential housing, buildings, estates;- perceptual chaos and territorial indoctrination, placelessness: of the urban structure, social structure, toponymy;- change in the population structure of town → the apartment market, distribution of social groups (domain of social ecology of town);- introduction of administrative quarters as the instrument of implementation of disintegration of urban community (the boundaries of the thus delimited quarters differ from the historical boundaries of the basic quarters – the natural units) – spatial disintegration;- low degree of social participation in the process of transformation of the spatial structure of Warsaw;- appearance of the hyper-markets (disintegration of the neighbourhood ties existing previously in the domain of common shopping in the estate facilities).
The economic aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- concentration of capital and foreign trade;- higher share in imports from the European Union than for the entire country;- trend toward establishment of expensive and exclusive boutiques and service parlours.
The functional aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- detachment of Warsaw from the surrounding region of Masovia;- inconsistency of the spatial structure of town and its social structure;- disappearance of the monofunctional urban zones.
The nominal aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- institutionalisation of changes disagreeing with the local tradition.

Author's elaboration on the basis of: Chmielewski (2002), Jarosz (2002), Komornicki (2002), Korcelli (2002), Kowalczyk (2002), Leśniakowska (2000, 2002), Nowosielska (2002), Rykiel (2002) and own research

There are many places in Warsaw, which are telling for the condition of the capital and the entire country against the background of Europe. At the same time, they show very clearly the current character of relations between Poland and other countries. Such a sort of a touchstone (as well as a perfect example of some dis/integrative aspects within the urban tissue of Warsaw, just mentioned above in the tables) appears to be constituted by the Piłsudski square, stretching between Królewska, Moliera and Wierzbowa streets, bordering on the West with the Saxon Garden. This square was in older days called Saxon square, had as its western wall the very Saxon Palace, while its centre was occupied in the 19th century by the Orthodox Church of A. Nevski, with quite a tall bell tower. These structures, of Russian style, deprived the place of aesthetic value (similarly as the nearby Orthodox church at Krakowskie Przedmieście street, into which the Staszic Palace was turned), and were also the evidence as to who is ruling the city (in the period of Russian occupation) (see Fig. 4). After the independence had been regained, in the 1920s, the Orthodox church in the Square was demolished, the Saxon palace restored, within the colonnade of which the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was established, and in 1925 the remnants of the participants of the struggle for independence were laid in the Tomb (Drozdowski, 1973, p. 42; Garlicki, 1996, p. 115). Yet before the outbreak of the World War II the square was named in the honour of the Head of State Marshall Józef Piłsudski, who ruled the Commonwealth in the first half of the interwar period.

In 1945 this was already the Victory square, with the western, southern and partly northern frontages in disorder. The solemn changing of the guards at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (the preserved rest of the colonnade of the Saxon Palace), located on the Saxon axis (one of the grand urban designs of the town), reminded over the subsequent communist lay decades of the fact that this place is sacred.

The name of Victory square gained a new meaning at the end of the 1970s, when, during his first pilgrimage to Poland, the Polish Pope John Paul II celebrated in the Square the Holy Mass. Soon after, the movement of "Solidarity" emerged and the social and political image of Poland changed entirely. The Square, which after full independence had been regained in 1989, returned to the name of Józef Piłsudski, started to be perceived as the space of an important social dialogue, despite the architectural inconsistency. The aura of the place is disturbed only by the New Year open-air festivities and the roller-skaters, putting their skills on display. Opposite to the Tomb of Unknown Soldier the monument to J. Piłsudski was erected, while far away westwards, along the Saxon axis, the office building of Daewoo-Poland, the Warsaw Trade Tower, was constructed (in 1996–1999)... The cylinder, topping this sky-scraper "surmounts" directly the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier when one looks from the East towards the West, standing in Krakowskie Przedmieście street, which infringes on the landscape and cultural identity of the place...

Moreover, in the autumn of 2001 construction was started of the Metropolitan office building in the northern part of the Square, behind the Great Theatre. Among numerous controversies associated with the location and the architectural form of the building, as

well as its scale and height, the hope appears for the final ordering of the northern wall of the square and an addition of a new spatial value – an internal public yard within the Metropolitan office building.

Such was, therefore, the course of changes in the Piłsudski square, brought about by the historical events, making out of this place at a time the focus of the national integration processes, and at some other time the expression the processes of internationalisation of the urban tissue of Warsaw and of European integration.

Conclusion

What was the role of Warsaw in the process of national integration in the years 1914–1939?

1. Warsaw as the capital city was the centre of political life of the country, where the processes of unification of the large political parties, trade organisations and the cultural and educational institutions concentrated.
2. Warsaw was the promoter of the interests of the finally regained own statehood, where the manifestations of independence, integrity and sovereignty were taking place, and was the main organiser of the integration process, as well as the primary stimulator of the integration processes in the national economy.
3. Warsaw played the role of an economic link in the inter-regional trade operations.
4. Warsaw, the town-symbol of the regained Polish statehood, acted as an integrating myth: the myth of the “revolutionary Warsaw” of 1905–1907, the myth of “Paris of the North” or “Paris of the East”, the myth of the “Warsaw’s Miracle over Vistula” of 1920, when the Red Army was defeated at the outskirts of town, the myth of the “street-smart” Warsaw, the myth of “Warsaw – bureaucratic monster”, the myth of “light-hearted Warsaw”, where life is pleasant and monies come easy...
5. Warsaw turned out to be the source of gradual socio-professional modernisation, emanating all over the country.
6. Despite the heritage of the tsarist educational and cultural politics, Warsaw integrated the entire country in terms of culture, owing to the ideas, views, slogans, programmes, fashions, anecdotes, gossips, jokes, popular music, songs, publications, education, radio broadcasting (the highly particular role of the radio in September 1939), and the artistic circles (Drozdowski, 1973).

The lost and gained qualities in the process of international integration since 1989

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incapacity of reading out the features of the culture of Warsaw from the image of the streets and the urban tissue. • Amplification of the spatial and perception chaos in the town. Liquidation of the legible spatial divisions. • Sky-scraping office buildings growing in the downtown overshadow or replace the historical dominants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic and functional diversity, despite the spatial chaos. • Accessibility and application of the modern technological solutions and better materials (e.g. in construction), more careful execution (aesthetics) – the achievements in terms of civilisation. • In terms of economy and civilisation (foreign investments, presence of large capital) Warsaw gained.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying of the cosmopolitan models: primitive architectural clichés of the trivial western European designs. • Lack of urban, architectural, physiognomic and spatial unity of Warsaw (the overall vision of development). • Excessively liberal policy of urban space management, lack of legal regulations and urban development plans (spatial anarchy). • Detachment of Warsaw (whose economic indicators are oftentimes on the European level) from the direct vicinity, the region (Masovia), and perhaps also the entire country... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappearance of the “no man’s lands”.
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Elaborated on the basis of: Chmielewski (2002), Kiciński (2002) and own research

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Integration of the Polish state brought about a partial disintegration of the inter-war Warsaw, but the city established its identity anew as a fighting city, a special city, a city with a character.

European integration makes contemporary Warsaw similar to other cities, washing away its individual distinctive features and disintegrating its inner space. Consequently, the Warsaw identity is disappearing. The capital of Poland became a city tamed by the capitalism and free market, in distinction from Prague or Budapest. This fact can be explained by the necessity of “catching up” in terms of delays in the development of civilisation and a too fast rate of the socio-economic transformation of the country. It can also be associated with the dramatic history, tragic events, and the intermediate, if not transitional, position on the line East-West. A further explanation may lie in the mentality of Poles, the traditions of Polish nobility, and the political aspirations, which have almost never had the roots in reality. All these are feasible explanations, but can one be satisfied with them?

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