ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Cooperation of slow cities as an opportunity for the development: an example of Polish National Cittaslow Network

Abstract

Research background: Many demographic, social, spatial, economic and infrastructural problems have accumulated in small cities in Poland. It seems that the situation of the smallest cities located farther away from large cities and metropolises is particularly difficult. A chance for their development may arise from cooperation within a network of cities which associates cities similar in size, paradigm and vision of development, such as the 'Cittaslow — International network of cities where living is good'.
Purpose of the article: The aim of the article is to identify main cooperation areas for slow cities in Poland. An analysis was made of the cooperation between 28 cities that are members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network.
Methods: The research applied a critical review of the literature and a diagnostic survey method. The survey was carried out with a standardised questionnaire. It was addressed to mayors of all member cities of the Polish National Cittaslow Network. The study was made in 2018.
Findings & Value added: The cooperation of cities belonging to the Cittaslow network in Poland is becoming more and more complex and concerns mainly the development of tourism and urban promotion. The shared logo and promotion of the urban network, organization of cultural events, exchange of experience, implementation of a supralocal revitalization program for several 'slow cities' from Warmia and Mazury, are examples of active cooperation. This proves that the competition between cities can be transformed into effective coopetition of cities. The idea of 'slow', which is fundamental to the development of the Cittaslow networked cities, creates an

opportunity to design an individual development model for small cities that could apply to cities in Poland and elsewhere in the world.

Introduction

The first conference of the International Association of Cittaslow, with the participation of the European Parliament, was held in Brussels in 2012. The conference aimed to present Cittaslow as a movement towards improving the quality of life of the European community. During this conference, Zygmunt Bauman, a sociologist, philosopher and the author of the concept of 'liquid modernity', stated that 'Cittaslow is one of the world's 18 forces capable of restoring the power of local communities. The development and incorporation of new cities into the Cittaslow movement in Europe unites nations that exchange experiences and, together, create a new quality of local life' (Zawadzka, 2017, p. 97).

Unsurprisingly, the number of cities in the Cittaslow International Network is constantly growing. There are already 252 member cities from 30 countries around the world. The Polish Cittaslow Network is the second most numerous national Cittaslow network, after the Italian one (*Cittaslow International List,* 2018, pp. 1–10).

The conditions of the development of slow cities are not only the optimal use of local endogenous resources, but also the development of multi-level cooperation in various areas; such as tourism, entrepreneurship, promotion and city management. Therefore, the aim of the article is to identify the main areas of cooperation between slow cities in Poland. The analysis included the cooperation between 28 cities that are members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network and the Polish Cittaslow Cities Association. The survey study used a standardised survey questionnaire, which was addressed to mayors of all member cities of the Polish National Cittaslow Network. The survey was performed in 2018, and the questionnaire was returned from all of the twenty-eight cities.

The article consists of the following sections:

− Introduction, which includes the aim of the article and a justification for the importance of the topic.
− Literature review, which shows who dealt with the development of the cities networks, especially in the Cittaslow International Network previously and what are the results of the prior studies, in particular, previous research from the author of this article.
− Research methodology section, which includes a hypothesis and a description of the research methods (surveys).

− Results & discussions, where the results of the survey are discussed in detail.
− Conclusions – a summary and possible directions for future research.

Literature review

According to the integrated territorial approach of the regional development policy (place-based approach), the basis for the development of modern cities is their endogenous resources, including human resources and the specialization of territories in the regions. According to the *Polish national strategy of regional development*: 'The road to effective use of endogenous development factors is networking of processes related to the implementation of pro-development activities by creating formal and informal links between various entities involved in development activities and located at various levels of development policy management' (2010, p. 76).

It emerges from the literature review that cooperation between cities can involve different areas and achieve different forms. There are two main types of networks of cities: multilateral (international organisations, Euroregions, national, regional and local associations) and bilateral (divided cities, borderland and frontier areas, neighbourhoods and other bilateral relationships) (see Taylor, 2001, pp. 181–194; Szmigiel-Rawska, 2017, pp. 41–48).

Cooperation between towns has different forms — from mutually lobbying for regional development, representing and defending the interests of small towns, and developing local government administration to protecting and promoting cultural heritage. Some urban networks actively participate in international conferences and EU consultations regarding priorities in such fields as internal EU policy, regional policy, spatial policy, public services, the natural environment or the partnership between towns. The EU funds, which play a key role in town development, are still difficult to obtain, and therefore some urban networks (for instance the European Network of Small Towns) strive for better adjustment of financial means to the execution of their tasks. A group of town networks which concentrate their actions on a narrow range of endogenous factors, for example on cultural heritage, may be distinguished. Such networks mainly serve to maintain and strengthen the historic character of their member towns, to exchange the know-how connected with archaeological research, tourism or promotion, to take into consideration the historical structures in urban planning, and to apply for European funds so as to participate in European projects together. Examples are the Network of European Walled Towns and the

Network of the Oldest European Towns. Urban networks also differ in their scale of actions, e.g. some carry out small-scale activities, which are mostly meaningless for the functioning or sustainable development of a town as a whole (e.g. the Network of Art Nouveau Towns) (Mazur-Belzyt, 2017, pp. 2–3).

An example of a network of small cities that is dynamically developing in Europe is the Cittaslow International Network.

The Cittaslow movement was initiated in 1999 by Paolo Saturnini, the mayor of Greve di Chianti in Italy and the mayors of other small cities: Bra, Orvieto, and Positano; as well as the Slow Food Association, who together founded the International Association of Cittaslow. This is how the 'Cittaslow — International network of cities where living is good' began. The organizational structure of the International Association of Cittaslow consists of the International Assembly, the International Coordinating Committee, the International President, the President Council, the Board of Guarantors, the International Scientific Committee and the Accounting Auditor. All organizational positions are appointed for 3 years.

In Poland, there is the Polish National Cittaslow Network and all the member cities belong to the Association known as 'Polish Cittaslow Cities', which has its own management. The Polish National Cittaslow Network is the world's second largest network (after the Italian one) in terms of the number of member cities which have joined the international Cittaslow movement. It comprises 28 member cities, 20 of which lie in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, including 4 founder cities: Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Lidzbark Warmiński, Reszel, and several others: Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Dobre Miasto, Działdowo, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Lidzbark, Lubawa, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olsztynek, Orneta, Pasym, Ryn, and Sępopol. There are 2 cities from the Opolskie Voivodeship (Głubczyce, Prudnik); 1 city from each of the following voivodeships: Pomorskie (Nowy Dwór Gdański), Lubelskie (Rejowiec Fabryczny), Łódzkie (Rzgów), Śląskie (Kalety), Wielkopolskie (Murowana Goślina) and Zachodnio-pomorskie (Sianów). The supporting member of the Polish Cittaslow Network is the Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.

The idea behind the international Cittaslow movement is to promote the culture of good, harmonious life in smaller cities, as an alternative to the metropolitan rush and progressing globalization. Cities associated in this network strive towards sustainable development, which relies on a well-planned urban policy that ensures proper relations between economic growth, environmental protection and improved quality of life for residents. The principal goals of the Cittaslow movement are: sustainable develop-

ment of cities based on local resources, improved standards of living, for example by constructing adequate urban infrastructure and developing places where residents can rest and relax, protecting the natural environment and promoting pro-environmental attitudes among residents, taking care of the historical urban structure, renovating historical buildings, paying attention to the aesthetic quality of the city, and promoting the culture of hospitality. However, it is also a principle to ensure that both residents and visitors are offered a wide range of cultural and leisure time activities. It is also recommended to promote the aforementioned values of a city, to advertise local products, local crafts and cuisine, and to take advantage of the latest technologies and achievements of the modern world, in a scope that will serve to attain the goals of the Cittaslow movement, such as the development of 'cities where living is good.'

'Slow cities' are places where citizens and local leaders pay attention to the local history and employ the distinct local context to develop their cities in better and more sustainable ways. More generally, the 'slow city model' focuses on local distinctiveness and explicitly links the three E's (economy, environment and equity) of sustainable urban development (Mayer & Knox, 2006, p. 322).

Certainly, benefits derived from the implementation of a 'slow city' model contribute to the actual development of cities. The review of strategic documents of Polish Cittaslow cities shows that these cities have characteristics of small-town socioeconomic problems, namely diminishing population, unemployment, poverty, low interest from external investors, rather low quality tourism and recreation infrastructure, an excessively low quality of municipal and local roads, inadequate waterworks and sewerage infrastructure, low revenue to the municipal budget, etc. (Zadęcka, 2018, pp. 96–97).

Cities that have adopted a similar development model ('slow city') can reap many benefits associated with the development of tourism, and the collaborative international promotion of slow cities contributes to the place brand or specific city brand. The Cittaslow association has its own logo, depicting 'an orange coloured snail bearing a crown of modern and historical buildings.'

'Slow city' as a label can have a powerful marketing effect for the associated cities, which are using their membership to advertise their values to external audiences, such as tourists and entrepreneurs. More substantive goals of environmental protection, economic localism, and sustainability are pursued by grassroots environmental groups and the locally rooted business community. Thus, cohesion is achieved through multiple paths in which the status of a Cittaslow town can be interpreted and applied by vari-

ous supporters for urban development purposes (Mayer & Knox, 2006, p. 331).

Possible benefits for a Cittaslow city include (Farelnik *et al.*, 2017, pp. 421–422): a greater satisfaction of city residents from living in a given city, hence a lower rate of migration of young people and others to larger cities; an increase in the demand for products and services, thus an increase in investment options for the city; an increase in the number of investments aimed at providing residents with new places of work as well as an increase in distributable profits; the economic development of the city owing to the non-decreasing domestic demand and the number of investments; an increase in a city's attractiveness to tourists, which in turn stimulates further economic growth; the creation of a city's distinct, desirable image, which attracts more interest by various managing entities, and thus increases the city's competitive edge.

Small cities in the network can achieve network effects and synergy effects. 'Synergy' refers to a situation where the effect of two or more co-operating or combined bodies or functions is larger than the sum of the effects each body or function alone can achieve. Synergy is often popularly formulated as $1 + 1 > 2$, which emphasizes well that synergy can be expressed as the rise in performance of a network through efficient and effective interaction (Meijers, 2005, pp. 766–767).

Network cooperation of small cities can be a prospective way to improve their socioeconomic positions of the region (Mingaleva *et al.*, 2017, p. 151). In the long run, with proper promotion and cooperation, participation in the Cittaslow network may provide member cities with a chance to appear on a regional or European map (Zawadzka, 2017, p. 95).

The development of the Cittaslow network may have a significant influence on the socio-economic development of the entire region. One of the areas where positive effects can become evident is in tourism, so-called slow tourism (see McGrath & Sharpley, 2018, pp. 49–62). For example, the network of Cittaslow cities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship is perceived as one of the four major image-creating tourist products in the region. The development of this product is based on: the attractiveness of the networked cities as destinations for touring and weekend tourism, the development of a strong brand for every city, local tourist products, the social and cultural potential of small cities, the assumptions of slow philosophy and education in this scope, and in the pro-health image of Cittaslow; such as clean air, natural and traditional food, and little pollution of the natural environment (*Strategy of tourism development…,* 2016, p. 43).

The importance of Cittaslow cities for the development of regions is highlighted in publications concerning the Polish Cittaslow network as well

as such networks in Italy, Turkey or China (see Çiçek *et al.*, 2019, pp. 400–414; Üstündağlı *et al.,* 2015, pp. 125–144; Yurtseven & Kaya, 2011, pp. 91–98). It is worth noting that the development of national Cittaslow networks depends on many factors of both national and regional character, and therefore the development of cooperation among cities in different countries may proceed differently, i.e. it can have a different scope, character or pace. Hence, researchers mention the European or Asian model of Cittaslow (see Shi *et al.*, 2019, pp. 1265–1282).

The following universal features of the 'slow city' model can be distinguished:

1. It is a model that adheres to the 'slow' philosophy, which bears influence on such aspects of life as recognizing the value of time, or making conscious consumer choices by both the city's inhabitants and visitors.
2. It is a model based on the city's endogenous capital, local community and the site's cultural capital.
3. It is a model based on cooperation between many subjects, meaning not just the cooperation of local subjects, inhabitants, entrepreneurs, authorities, organizations and other entities; but also cooperation despite competition between Cittaslow networked cities. This is the so-called coopetition, which is a joint effort in such areas as promoting each city as a member of the Cittaslow network, creating a tourist-orientated product composed of the entire region, and acquiring funds for revitalization of cities.
4. It may be a formal or a nonformal model. The implementation of a 'slow city' model in Poland most often entails the membership of a given city in the Polish National Cittaslow Network, thereby becoming a member of the Association 'Polish Cittaslow Cities'. On the other hand, it can rely on a nonformal, local community of persons centred around the concept of 'slow' in its various dimensions.
5. This is a model that can be applied in different spatial dimensions, from a city district or a single city to a network of cities ('slow district', 'slow city', 'slow network') (Tocci, 2018, p. 125).
6. It can also be a simple or hybrid model, the latter drawing from other concepts of development, e.g. 'smart city', 'green city', etc.
7. This is an adaptable rather than a universal model, which means that it is not presumed to be the best model for all small cities. Each city is searching for its way to build an image of a 'slow city' and is taking advantage of the opportunity for development owing to its membership in the national or international network of the Cittaslow. However, the model does not offer universal solutions which will work well in every small city.

It is worth emphasizing that candidate cities are evaluated in 7 areas: energy and environmental policy, infrastructure policies, quality of urban life policies, agricultural, touristic and artisan policies, policies for hospitality, awareness and training, social cohesion, and partnerships. If a town's certification score exceeds 50% of the requirements, it will be declared a new Cittaslow member. The criteria for certification of a new member and re-certification of 'old' members of Cittaslow can be a determinant of the urban development policy that will be implemented in the future. The list of all 72 criteria includes 31 obligatory requirements, 5 prospective requirements and 36 other requirements. They are presented in Table 1.

Common bottom-up initiatives and activities that are implemented in 'slow cities' are: cooking courses in schools and kindergartens in accordance with the 'slow food' philosophy, new projects aimed at protecting local products and crafts (rediscovering them), programs of communication between local entities, expansion of pedestrian and cyclist zones, periodic inspections of water and air quality, creation of public green areas, establishment of construction companies which meet environmental protection requirements, regulation of construction methods, organic production growth, establishment of vegetable gardens in accordance with the 'slow food' philosophy, promotion of local cultural events, publishing tourist guides to 'slow cities', designation of routes for tourists, and the promotion of hospitality among inhabitants.

Unfortunately, sometimes the development of cooperation within a network of cities may be hindered by conflicting interests and particularisms in partnerships, administrative and communication barriers, bad practices and habits among officials and partners (mental barriers), inability of partners to think strategically or with a long-term perspective, environmental, political, economic and other conflicts, short term periods in the local government, no long-term local strategy, formal and legal barriers, ignorance of benefits from cooperation (assessment of cooperation only in terms of quantitative and measurable objectives), a low level of knowledge of the 'slow' philosophy and a low level of Cittaslow identification with the network.

Research methodology

Based on the literature review, it can be stated that cooperation in a network of cities is an opportunity for the development of small towns, not only in Europe, but all over the world. A perfect example of this is the development of cooperation between cities in the Polish Cittaslow Network.

The aim of the study was to identify main areas of cooperation between slow cities in Poland. The analysis included cooperation between 28 cities that are members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network and the Polish Cittaslow Cities Association. The research hypothesis was that the major area for cooperation between the cities which belong to the Polish National Cittaslow Network, which affects the development of these cities, thereby influencing the development of the whole network, is tourism.

The applied research methods were a critical literature analysis, and an analysis of the results of a questionnaire survey. The survey was based on a standardized questionnaire, which contained closed, semi-open and open questions. It was addressed to mayors of all member cities of the Polish Cittaslow Network: Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Dobre Miasto, Działdowo, Głubczyce, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Kalety, Lidzbark, Lidzbark Warmiński, Lubawa, Murowana Goślina, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Nowy Dwór Gdański, Olsztynek, Orneta, Pasym, Prudnik, Rejowiec Fabryczny, Reszel, Ryn, Rzgów, Sępopol, and Sianów. The survey was emailed in 2018 to all 28 Cittaslow cities in Poland and was returned by all addressees.

Results

Member cities of the Polish National Cittaslow Network are diverse. They differ in size, as well as in natural and cultural values. Every city has unique, valuable features. Each city has a different history, tradition and different socio-economic potential (Wierzbicka, 2020, p. 217). The cities are diverse in terms of size, population and length of their membership the network. As many as 25 cities have fewer than 20,000 residents. In particular, nine cities have a population below 5,000. These are: Bisztynek, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Pasym, Rejowiec Fabryczny, Reszel, Rzgów, Ryn, and Sępopol. There are between 5,000 and 10,000 inhabitants in seven cities: Barczewo, Kalety, Lidzbark, Nowy Dwór Gdański, Olsztynek, Orneta, and Sianów. Nine cities, Biskupiec, Dobre Miasto, Głubczyce, Gołdap, Lidzbark Warmiński, Lubawa, Murowana Goślina, Nidzica, and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie are inhabited by 10,000 to 20,000 people. The three largest cities in the network, Bartoszyce, Działdowo, Prudnik, have a population of 20,000 to 30,000.

Until 2013, the Polish Cittaslow Network had consisted of 12 cities: Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Lidzbark Warmiński, Reszel (these cities accessed the network in 2007), Murowana Goślina, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie (2010), Lubawa, Olsztynek, Ryn (2012), Barczewo, Dobre Miasto, and Gołdap

(2013). Sixteen other cities have joined the network since 2013: Górowo Iławeckie, Kalety, Nidzica, Nowy Dwór Gdański, Pasym, Rejowiec Fabryczny (2014), Bartoszyce, Działdowo, Lidzbark, Orneta, Prudnik (2015), Głubczyce, Jeziorany, Sępopol (2016), Rzgów, and Sianów (2017).

According to our research, the main areas of cooperation between Cittaslow cities in Poland are: promotion of the city — 21% of respondents, tourism — 16%, culture — 15%, sport — 10%, recreation — 9%, management — 7%, spatial economy — 6%, environment protection — 6%, local enterprise — 3%, education — 3% (see Figure 1.). Examples of activities are: promotion of cultural, sports and integration events held in the member cities on the website of the Polish Cittaslow Network and International Cittaslow Network; websites of member cities' municipal offices and on Facebook; the permission to use the Cittaslow logo to promote network products; educating children about the need to protect the natural environment and local tradition; exchange of experience among the authorities and local entities; and the implementation of the *Supralocal revitalization program of the cities of the Cittaslow network of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship* financed from European Union funds (2018, p. 153).

The respondents indicated types of activities that are important for the permanent cooperation of Polish slow cities. The main ones are (see Table 2.):

− Exchanging experience and good practice during mutually held events, meetings and conferences (16.0% of all responses) – subjects from the Cittaslow networked cities (mayors, representatives of NGOs, inhabitants, etc.) participate in workshops, trainings, and scientific conferences, where they discuss directions in which their cities can develop, what initiatives and projects they can implement together, what instruments and chances for the implementation of such projects they have, and where the 'slow' concept can be promoted. Such events contribute to stronger integration, exchange of know-how and experience, as well as collaboration among various participants involved.

− Conducting promotional activities with another member city or other member cities (15.2%) – the member cities highlight the fact that they belong to a network of cities with a good quality of life, and they use the Cittaslow logo, such as the orange-coloured snail, in a member city's promotional materials. They also promote local events on websites of the Polish and international networks of Cittaslow, and on webpages of tourist organisations and on Facebook.

− Multidimensional cooperation with the supporting member, the Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship (11.2%) – was particularly important not only at the early stage of the network's development in Poland, but also is important today when the network has 28 member cities. The Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, and more specifically its Department of Tourism, comprises the Office for Cittaslow Matters, which coordinates the process of certification of cities and also initiates and co-organizes many activities within the network.

− Implementation of the project *Supralocal revitalization program of the cities of the Cittaslow network of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship* (10.4%) – under the integrated program of revitalization, involving 19 Cittaslow member cities, the cities are carrying out revitalization projects, which improve the quality of space, bring about positive social effects and contribute to a better standard of living. They also take advantage of the opportunity to gain additional funds for revitalization, for example from the European Regional Development Fund.

− Acting as a 'mentor city' for a candidate city applying to join the Cittaslow network (9.6%) – this can give rise to permanent relations between the two cities, which recognize the opportunity for development owing to the adopted 'slow city' development model.

− Executing cultural projects together with one or several member cities (9.6%) – such measures often involve naturally developing neighbourhood relations between cities, similarities in local culture features, nurturing what is local, unique, and rare in the architectural and cultural heritage of a city.

− Collaboratively executing projects or programs connected with the social sphere, with one or several member cities (8.8%) – inclusion of different social groups in a dialogue about the city, integration of the local community, exploring the needs and ways of satisfying such expectations among different groups of the city's users, solving social problems through the complex revitalization of areas where social, economic or architectural problems have accumulated, promoting positive attitudes among young people, and integrating residents around the 'slow' concept.

− Using the support of the 'mentor city' in the application process to join the Cittaslow network (8.0%) – this is a relationship between cities where positive experiences can influence the future cooperation between these cities, once the candidate city has passed the certification process.

− Collaboratively executing infrastructural projects with one or several member cities (6.4%) – this mainly concerns the transportation infra-

structure, which affects the communication between the cities and ac-
cessibility of sites to tourists, e.g. a grid of bicycle paths or tourist trails
connecting the cities.
− Active participation in the association's organizational structures (3.2%)
– it is not only the board of the 'Polish Cittaslow Cities' Association,
but also the representation of Polish cities in the organization of the In-
ternational Cittaslow Network, which helps to build strong cooperation
between the authorities of the member cities.

Permanent cooperation of cities in the Cittaslow network is an oppor-
tunity for the development of small cities in Poland. The study has shown
that the cooperation undertaken among the Polish slow cities most often
pertained to tourism, promotion and culture. Shared activities pursued by
cities implementing the same development model can involve, for example,
the promotion of tourist attractions and cultural events which take place in
these cities. Noteworthy is the fact that one of the initiators and partners in
this cooperation, especially in the early stages of development of the Polish
Cittaslow network, was the Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie
Voivodeship. In the long-term, the cooperation of cities in the mentioned
area can contribute to improved recognition of Polish slow cities in the
international arena, and to the creation of a distinct, networked tourist
product in the region.

A significant role in the further development of cooperation among slow
cities (in different areas) is assigned to the experience gained during the
activities pursued together. Sharing experience and good practice, partici-
pating in meetings and study trips, support given by cities in the process of
certification, mutual performance of social activities and a supralocal pro-
gramme of urban revitalization are just some of the activities that have
already been undertaken and which help to make relationships between the
cities stronger; building trust among all Cittaslow network participants.

Discussion

To the best knowledge of the author of this article, other research regarding
the Cittaslow cities cooperation in all member cities in Poland has not been
carried out; therefore, the results presented in this article are not compara-
ble. At present, there are no exhaustive studies dealing with this issue, con-
cerning either the Polish or other national Cittaslow networks. Most inves-
tigations are selective; for example, they concern one shared project (and
a specific sphere of urban life), a couple or a few cooperating cities, etc.
(see Presenza *et al*., 2015, pp. 40–64; Strzelecka, 2018, pp. 53–62). They

often are more general in character and deal with the effects of membership in the Polish National Cittaslow in general (see Batyk &Woźniak, 2019, pp. 63–64; Zadęcka, 2018, pp. 96, 100–101); without focusing on the aspect of cooperation among cities.

However, many researchers have drawn attention to the importance of cooperation for the development of a city, but they mostly relate cooperation to the city's internal local subjects (authorities, residents, entrepreneurs, organisations). For instance, Rysz and Mazurek (2015, p. 45) write that the successful implementation of projects and the slow city's ideas and model depends on the cooperation of local communities, governments and businesses. What matters is both the dialogue and the attitudes of each of these entities. The implemented concepts must be proportional to the needs and awareness of local communities, which is undeniably the most important feature of a city.

This study fills a gap in the knowledge of areas of cooperation between Cittaslow cities at a national network level. The most important areas of urban cooperation were identified as well as the types of mutually pursued activities, which also have an impact on how this cooperation will develop in the future.

Since the survey was conducted among the mayors of all the member cities, its results can be said to reflect the opinion of the authorities of the Polish slow cities with regards to the cooperation between the cities they govern. However, it is necessary to deepen the research in this field, and to conduct studies addressed to other actors involved in cooperation (including cultural institutions, organisations, associations, residents, entrepreneurs, and educational institutions). This would ensure a full picture of the cooperation between cities so far, and the factors underpinning the development of this cooperation.

In addition to the experience gained from cooperation between cities, which was determined in this study, attention should be paid to other conditions which can affect the direction in which cooperation between cities will develop. This is especially true with regards to the characteristics of the 'slow city' model itself, and the process of its evolution and adaptation.

The process of creating so-called hybrid models of urban development could be a temporary, transient stage on the road to elaborating another model for the development of a city, more intrinsic and more adequately responding to reality. This can also be a process treated as an expression of the resilience of cities, which are adjusting themselves to the dynamically changing needs of their inhabitants, and to the conditions prevailing in their nearest and more global surroundings.

An attempt undertaken by modern cities to combine the potential offered by two developmental concepts, the 'smart city' and the 'slow city', may contribute to the creation of an image of a 'smart slow city' which, as a member of the Cittaslow network, considers the quality of residential life as a priority, and implements modern technological solutions (Farelnik & Stanowicka, 2016, p. 359).

For the concept of 'a slow city' to evolve towards a hybrid model (e.g.'a smart slow city' or 'a slow green city'), great awareness of the characteristics of the 'slow city' concept and benefits obtainable from its implementation are needed, alongside lasting relationships between member cities within the network. There may be cooperation within smaller groups of cities located in close proximity, for example on the same tourist trail, or having a common agricultural background, which could serve as the foundation for an individual development model under the framework of a greater specialisation in a larger network of slow cities (the Cittaslow Network).

The fact that new cities join the Cittaslow network may be evidence that municipal authorities perceive membership in the network as an opportunity for socioeconomic development. Most slow cities (20 in total) in Poland are in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, a region with a high potential for the development of tourism. Considering the localisation of Cittaslow cities in Poland, the general features of 'slow cities' and the assumption of the 'slow city' model, combined with the research results, justifies the conclusion that the main areas for cooperation between cities that belong to the Cittaslow network are tourism and the promotion of the city. In regions where the Cittaslow network is developing, this is the branch of the economy that can be relied on, due to the growth of entrepreneurship and services in slow cities.

Conclusions

The research results indicate that the Cittaslow member cities in their efforts to implement a 'slow city' model take advantage of the ongoing cooperation within the network in the field of promotion and tourism, they undertake actions to perform shared projects, exchange experience, and they organize events, meetings and conferences; the aim of which is to strengthen the cooperation. The network is diverse, as it encompasses both member cities who have belonged to the network for several years and members who have joined very recently. Thus, more time is needed to build lasting cooperation. The analysis of the measures taken so far has revealed many

positive outcomes, but building permanent cooperation based on trust is a long-term process, which is not facilitated by the local authorities being elected to serve relatively short terms. The collaboration of cities can contribute to maximizing the benefit from the membership in the Cittaslow network, and gaining so-called network effects, which can also help the Polish Cittaslow Network to distinguish itself internationally as a network of cities by its unique character and the high-quality label of 'Polish slow cities'. The cooperation between the cities seems crucial to building such a brand.

The cooperation of cities belonging to the Cittaslow network in Poland is becoming more and more complex and mainly concerns the development of tourism and urban promotion, and the planning of development policy and urban regeneration. The shared logo and promotion of the network, the organization of cultural events, the exchange of experiences, and the implementation of a supralocal revitalization program are examples of active cooperation. This shows that the competition of cities can evolve into effective coopetition of cities. The idea of 'slow', which is fundamental to the growth of the Cittaslow member towns, offers a chance to find an individual development model for small cities in Poland and elsewhere in the world.

The study discussed above is a preliminary one, which needs to be pursued further. The results above are survey-based research and concern subjective opinions given by mayors of the 'slow cities'. A more in-depth analysis supported by other methods, not only qualitative, is required. For example, not only may surveys be addressed to other city users, but research may be based on the statistical analysis of quantitative variables, selected for the purpose and connected with the socioeconomic development of cities; especially the growth of tourism. It would also be advisable to make comparisons of the character and scope of cooperation between cities which belong to the Cittaslow network, or between Cittaslow cities and cities outside this network. Another possibility is to make a comparative analysis of cooperation between cities which are members of different national Cittaslow networks (both within their national network and between national networks). This would help to identify areas of cooperation, as well as factors enabling and preventing cooperation, which could be used to compare such factors and barriers in a regional aspect.

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Annex

Table 1. Requirements for the excellence of Cittaslow cities

Category	Requirements
Energy and environmental policy	1. Air quality conservation 2. Water quality conservation 3. Drinking water consumption of residents 4. Urban solid separate waste collection 5. Industrial and domestic composting 6. Purification of sewage disposal 7. Energy saving in buildings and public systems 8. Public energy production from renewable sources 9. Reduction of visual pollution, traffic noise 10. Reduction of public light pollution 11. Electrical energy consumption of resident families 12. Conservation of biodiversity
Infrastructure policies	13. Efficient cycle paths connected to public buildings 14. Length of the urban cycle paths created over the total of kms of urban roads 15. Bicycle parking in interchange zones 16. Planning of ecomobility as an alternative to private cars 17. Removal of architectural barriers 18. Initiatives for family life and pregnant women 19. Verified accessibility to medical services 20. 'Sustainable' distribution of merchandise in urban centers 21. Percentage of residents that commute daily to work in another town
Quality of urban life policies	22. Planning for urban resilience 23. Interventions of recovery and increasing the value of civic centers (street furniture, tourist signs, aerials, urban landscape mitigation conservation) 24. Recovery/creation of social green areas with productive plants and/or fruit trees 25. Urban livableness ('house-work, nursery, company hours etc.) 26. Requalification and reuse of marginal areas 27. Use of ITC in the development of interactive services for citizens and tourists 28. Service desk for sustainable architecture (bioarchitecture etc.) 29. Cable network city (fiber optics, wireless) 30. Monitoring and reduction of pollutants (noise, electrical systems etc.) 31. Development of telecommuting 32. Promotion of private sustainable urban planning 33. Promotion of social infrastructure (time based currency, free cycling projects etc.) 34. Promotion of public sustainable urban planning 35. Recovery/creation of productive green areas with productive plants and/or of fruit within the urban perimeter 36. Creation of spaces for the commercialization of local products 37. Protection /increasing value of workshops – creation of natural shopping centers 38. Meter cubes of cement (net infrastructures) in green urban areas

Table 1. Continued

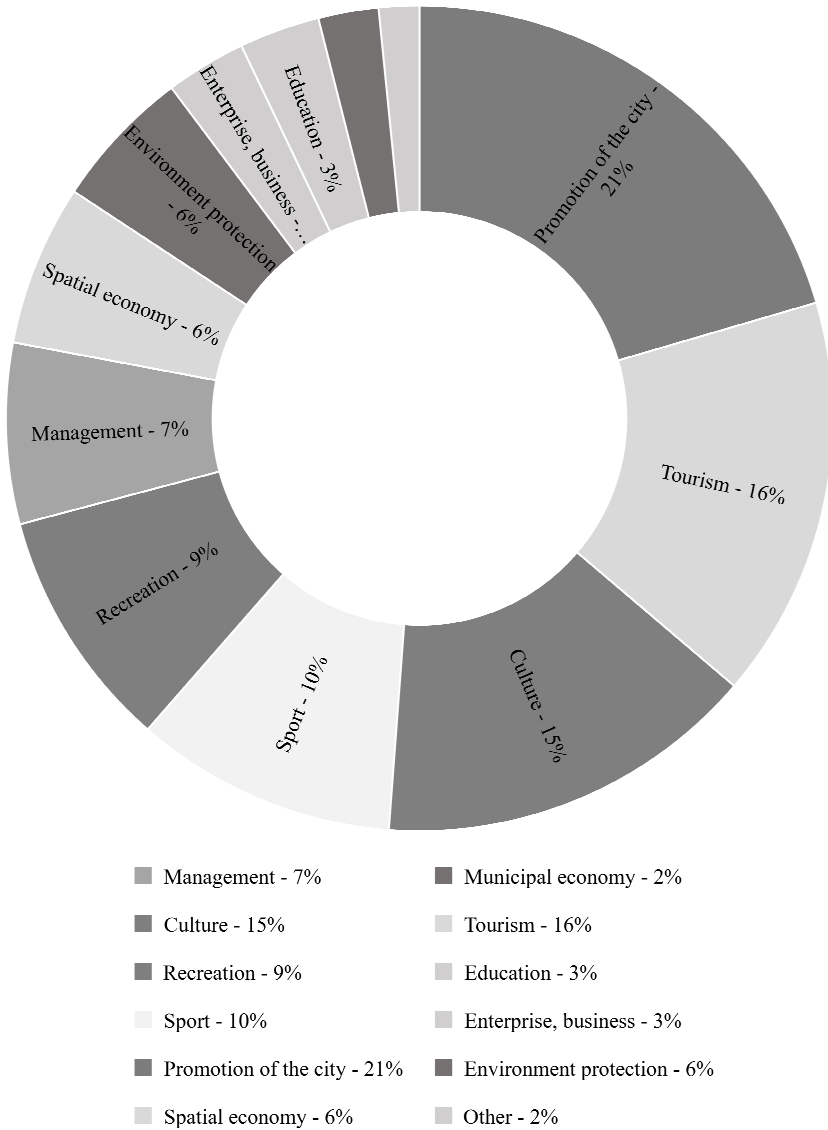| Category	Requirements
Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies	39. Development of agro-ecology
	40. Protection of handmade and labelled artisan production, (certified, museums of culture, etc.)
	41. Increasing the value of working techniques and traditional crafts
	42. Increasing the value of rural areas (greater accessibility to resident services)
	43. Use of local products, if possible organic, in communal public restaurants (school canteens etc.)
	44. Education of flavors and promoting the use of local products, if possible organic in the catering industry and private consumption
	45. Conservation and increasing the value of local cultural events
	46. Additional hotel capacity
	47. Prohibiting the use of GMO in agriculture
	48. New ideas for enforcing plans concerning land settlements previously used for agriculture
Policies for hospitality, awareness and training	49. Good welcome (training of people in charge, signs, suitable infrastructure and hours)
	50. Increasing awareness of operators and traders
	51. Availability of 'slow' itineraries (printed, web etc.)
	52. Adoption of active techniques suitable for launching bottom-up processes in the more important administrative decisions
	53. Permanent training of trainers and /or administrators and employees on Cittaslow slow themes
	54. Health education (battle against obesity, diabetes etc.)
	55. Systematic and permanence information for the citizens regarding the meaning of Cittaslow
	56. Active presence of associations operating with the administration on Cittaslow themes
	57. Support for Cittaslow campaigns
	58. Insertion/use of Cittaslow logo on headed paper and website
Social cohesion	59. Minorities discriminated against
	60. Enclave / neighbors
	61. Integration of disabled people
	62. Child care
	63. Youth conditioning
	64. Poverty
	65. Community association
	66. Multicultural integration
	67. Political participation
	68. Public housing
	69. The existence of youth activity areas, and a youth center
Partnerships	70. Support for Cittaslow campaigns and activity
	71. Collaboration with other organizations promoting natural and traditional food
	72. Support for twinning projects and cooperation for the development of developing countries covering also the spread philosophies of Cittaslow

Table 2. Types of activities important for the permanent cooperation of Polish slow cities (share of responses in %)

Lp.	Specification	Share of responses (%)
1.	Exchange of experience and good practice during mutually held events, meetings, and conferences	16.0
2.	Performance of promotional campaigns together with one or many member cities	15.2
3.	Multi-dimensional collaboration with the supporting member, i.e. the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office	11.2
4.	Implementation of the 'Supra-local program of revitalization of cities of the Cittaslow network', by a city which is a member of the Association 'Polish Cittaslow Cities'	10.4
5.	Acting as the so-called 'mentor city' for a candidate city applying to join the Cittaslow network	9.6
6.	Execution of cultural projects together with one or many member cities	9.6
7.	Execution of social sphere projects together with one or many member cities	8.8
8.	Taking advantage of the mentor city's support in the process of applying to become a member of the Cittaslow network	8.0
9.	Execution of infrastructural projects together with one or many member cities	6.4
10.	Active participation of the Association's organisational structures	3.2
11.	Others	1.6
12.	Total	100.0

Source: developed by the author, based on own survey research.

Figure 1. Main areas of cooperation between Cittaslow cities in Poland (share of area in %)

Source: developed by the author, based on own survey research.