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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITTASLOW NETWORK IN POLAND AND IN CHINA

### ROZWÓJ SIECI MIAST CITTASLOW W POLSCE I CHINACH

DOI: 10.25167/SM.4557

**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this article is to present the genesis and development of the Polish National Cittaslow Network and the Chinese National Cittaslow Network, as well as to draw attention to differences between the two 'slow city' models, respectively. The period of analysis spans the years 2007-2021. The research methods included a critical analysis of the relevant literature and source materials (statutes, regulations and other strategic documents of the association) and a comparative analysis. The main differences between the Polish and Chinese Cittaslow networks are related to cultural differences between these countries, with the dissimilar political systems and administrative divisions. The model of Cittaslow development in Poland is closer to the European 'slow city' model. The Chinese network is at the stage of searching for individual solutions corresponding to social, cultural and economic realities of the country.

**KEY WORDS:** network of cities, Cittaslow, slow city, Polish Cittaslow Network, Chinese Cittaslow Network

**ABSTRAKT:** Celem badań było przedstawienie genezy i rozwoju Polskiej Krajowej Sieci Miast Cittaslow oraz Chińskiej Krajowej Sieci Cittaslow oraz zwrócenie uwagi na różnice w polskim i chińskim modelu „slow city”. Analiza obejmuje okres od 2007 do 2021 roku. Zastosowane metody badawcze to krytyczna analiza literatury i materiałów źródłowych (statuty, regulaminy i inne dokumenty strategiczne stowarzyszenia) oraz analiza porównawcza. Główne różnice między Polską i Chińską Siecią Cittaslow są związane z różnicami kulturowymi między tymi krajami, z odmiennym systemem politycznym i podziałem administracyjnym. Model rozwoju Cittaslow w Polsce jest bliższy europejskiemu modelowi „slow city”. Chińska Sieć Cittaslow jest na etapie poszukiwania indywidualnych rozwiązań, adekwatnych do realiów społecznych, kulturowych i ekonomicznych kraju.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** sieć miast, Cittaslow, slow city, Polska Sieć Cittaslow, Chińska Sieć Cittaslow

## Introduction

Regardless of their location, socio-economic potential or the state's policy, contemporary cities search for a model of development that will enable them to stimulate growth, improve quality of life and raise the level of competitiveness. Different ap-

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proaches are employed in the process of managing and planning the development of a city, from simple concepts to more complex (hybrid) ones. Environmentally speaking, future cities are eco-cities, sustainable cities, coherent and resistant; socially, they are open, inclusive and participating cities; economically, they are productive, entrepreneurial, innovative, smart, competitive, well-managed and effective.

Among numerous development models and concepts employed in the urban policy of development, the role of the slow city model is gaining importance. This is manifested by the constantly increasing number of cities which belong to the International Cittaslow Network, which has already found proponents in nearly 30 countries. Currently, the network comprises 278 cities located in Europe as well as in North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Australia. National networks associating cities which develop in the spirit of slow philosophy differ from one another in some specific features, duration of their membership in the network, and in the socio-cultural and economic potential, which justifies analyses of actual Cittaslow development models in different national and global realities. As the Polish and Chinese National Cittaslow Networks are among the six largest ones (Italy, Poland, Germany, Turkey, South Korea and China boast of the biggest number of Cittaslow cities at present), the decision was made to compare the Polish and Chinese models of Cittaslow cities. The specific aims of the research were concerned with: presentation of the genesis of the International Cittaslow Network and characteristics of the main assumptions and pillars of the slow city model; showing the current state of the Polish National Cittaslow Network development and, respectively, the same issue for the Chinese National Cittaslow Network; comparison of the Polish and the Chinese Cittaslow model and identification of the main differences between National Cittaslow Networks. The object of this study were cities – members of the national Cittaslow networks in Poland and in China, while the research subject was the process of the development of slow cities in both countries. The time scope spanned the years 2007-2021. The research methods applied included a critical review of the relevant literature and source references (statutes, regulations, and other strategic documents adopted by the Cittaslow Association) and a comparative analysis.

## **The origin of the Cittaslow movement in the world**

The genesis of Cittaslow is connected with the growing popularity of the Slow Food movement and with the initiative taken by mayors of four small Italian cities: Bra, Greve in Chianti, Orvieto and Positano, who saw an opportunity for development of their cities in this philosophy and model of a city. The name Cittaslow originates from the words: ‘cittá’ in Italian (a city) and ‘slow’ in English. The Cittaslow International Network of Cities where Living is Good (Cittaslow International) was founded in Orvieto, Italy, on 15 October 1999. The association is a non-profit organization whose aim is to promote and disseminate “the culture of good life” and to implement solutions which serve to improve the quality of life in cities. Identity, historical memory, active citi-

zenship are the primary values promoted by this association (*Cittaslow International Charter* 2017: 5).

According to the Manifest of Slow Cities (*Życ powoli...* 2020: 2), these are cities where:

- an environmental policy is implemented in order to sustain and develop features of the territory and urban tissue, above all with the help of recycling technologies;
- an infrastructural policy is implemented in order to increase the value of the territory but not to dominate over it;
- technologies that aim to improve the quality of the natural environment and urban tissue are being promoted;
- production and consumption of food products obtained with the use of natural technologies, excluding genetically modified organisms, are supported;
- local products, with roots in the local culture and regional traditions are protected;
- hospitality culture is encouraged;
- the awareness of living in a slow city is promoted among the residents.

The association can be joined by ordinary members (cities with a population of no more than 50,000) and supporting members (e.g. provinces, municipalities, metropolitan areas, associations of communes, etc.). The organs of the associations include: President, International Assembly, International Coordinating Committee, Council and International Scientific Committee. The association can also be supported by the so-called Friends of Cittaslow, for example other associations, commerce chambers, businesses involved in production, services, tourism or agriculture, etc.

Cittaslow cities are first admitted to the international network and once the required number of member cities is achieved, they create a national network of Cittaslow cities (for example, the Polish National Cittaslow Network). The international network of slow cities is now composed of 278 cities from 30 countries (as of June 2021). It comprises as many as 20 national networks. The largest are in Italy (87 cities), Poland (35) and Germany (23), the sixth being the Chinese National Cittaslow Network (13) (*Cittaslow List* 2021: 1-10).

The main characteristics and underlying guidelines of the Cittaslow concept are:

- Cittaslow is an alternative to the hustle and bustle of large cities and negative consequences of globalization. Cittaslow is ‘a vaccine’ against excessively rapid progress, a contribution to the protection against social desertification and turbulent speculations or unsustainable development.
- Progress in slow cities is achieved by maintaining balance based on internal social and cultural resources, tradition, history and spirit of the place.
- The Cittaslow logo is a quality certificate – the symbol of the Cittaslow network, which is an orange-coloured snail bearing a crown of modern and historical buildings, is associated with taking care of and looking after what is local in the best way possible. This includes local traditions, crafts, cuisine, hospitality, etc.
- It is fundamental to the development of small and medium-size Cittaslow cities to engage in this process local communities, entrepreneurs, residents, organizations,

institutions, authorities. The bottom-up nature of initiatives carried out in a city (also, the bottom-up initiative to apply for the membership in the Cittaslow network) as well as the awareness and positive attitude to the Cittaslow philosophy among the city's inhabitants are the guarantee that the network's membership will bring about lasting and positive outcomes (Farelnek, Stanowicka and Wierzbicka 2020: 155).

– The development of Cittaslow cities is based on cooperation and networking – cities which belong to the international network gain many benefits derived from the mutual performance of projects, promotion or sharing good practices.

– Slow city is an individual model of the development of a city, which is a universal formula that works well in any small city. It is a certain way of thinking about the city's resources and development, about building the quality in all spheres of the city's life and about improving the quality of living for the city's residents. This model enables cities to find an opportunity to build own, customized solutions, best for a given city, and to pave their own way of development (Brodziński and Kurowska 2021: 12).

– “There is no smart without slow” – this model of development does not contradict technological progress; on the contrary – a slow city can use innovative technological solutions, especially in designing friendly urban spaces (Tocci 2018: 110-128). It is even possible to claim that the slow city model is undergoing hybridization towards the smart slow city model (Farelnek 2018: 137-146).

– The slow city model features as the basis for building urban resilience – more and more authors (Pink and Lewis 2014: 695-710; Carp 2012a: 169-172; Carp 2012b: 99-125; Strzelecka 2018: 121-130; Drobniak 2015: 119-143) draw attention to the fact that the notion of a slow city can be useful in such urban management, one of the aims of which is to deal better with crises or unexpected internal shocks. A higher level of resilience means the city can overcome a crisis easier and restore the pre-crisis condition more quickly.

Having analyzed the international scientific output concerning slow cities, official documents issued by the association and the policy of the member cities, it is possible to distinguish seven pillars of Cittaslow:

1. Slowing down and quality of living – perception of natural rhythms, time for development, socializing, appreciation of culture, nature and local cuisine, yet using all modern technological achievements to improve the quality and accessibility of an urban product in its broad sense (Cittaslow International Network 2021).

2. Local culture and heritage – the model of development is based on the informed use of local endogenous resources, mainly of social and cultural character. Local cultural resources and historical heritage are the basis for the creation of local identity of residents (Szymkowska 2017: 180). Thus, it is necessary to protect and develop the cultural heritage (tangible and intangible assets), local traditions, architecture, cuisine, identity and the so-called genius loci of a city (Murzyn-Kupisz 2012: 80-85).

3. Social justice – the development of cities is pursued in line with the principles of equality, respect and social justice, and respecting the needs of future generations (intergenerational justice).

4. Circular economy – striving for reduction of waste in production processes or in agriculture, organizing production processes in closed cycles, promoting informed consumption, recycling and multiple use of products, which are not so much a choice as the responsibility of informed citizens. More broadly, in cities it is necessary to move from linear to circular economy, understood as more than just closed cycle economy. J. Hausner defines this process as circular management, or more specifically, developmental circularity (Hausner 2019: 237-240, 268-273, 295-302; Cittaslow International Network 2021).

5. Sustainable development – the policy of a city's development is based on the paradigm of sustainable development, including the social, economic, spatial and environmental spheres. The pursuit of certain balance can also refer to the past-present-future relation, which features quite prominently in the Cittaslow philosophy (Pink and Seale 2017: 194-196; Brodziński and Kurowska 2021: 3-4). This approach entails a high degree of awareness, reflected, for example, by the preservation of the city's heritage, building a high quality of living for the city's residents, or having a well-defined vision of the city in the future.

6. Collaboration and networking are two processes without which the development of a city would not be possible. On the one hand, it is the collaboration carried out on a local level – creativity, participation, involvement of residents and local entities; on the other hand, it is the collaboration of local authorities, which, being aware of the benefits to be gained from the membership in the international and national Cittaslow networks, are willing to build collaborative relationships (in the scope of infrastructural, cultural or promotional projects). Such concurrent presence of cooperation and competition (for example, to obtain EU funds or to attract investors) is referred to as cooptation of local government units. Networks of cities are groups of urban centres within which the flow of goods, persons and ideas is possible (Glaeser et al. 2015: 11). Shared ideas and values in particular are an immanent trait of Cittaslow cities.

7. Resilience – informed and long-term policy of the city's development and management. Local handicrafts developed in slow cities which use innovative production methods and production process organization approaches while preserving the local uniqueness of products and services can be a key element in building 'resilient economy'. A decision to adopt the slow city development model can also be a response to critical situations, in consequence of which cities may find it difficult to recuperate (such as bushfires in Australia), or the philosophy of building a city resistant 'at the base', literally speaking (e.g. the plan to build a Cittaslow city from scratch in Changshan, China). Cities with a high degree of resilience are also ones which can be more competitive than others, ones that may find it difficult to deal with a sudden crisis (Szczech-Pietkiewicz 2019: 141-189). It can therefore be expected that small Cittaslow cities are more competitive in this respect than other small cities which implement other models of development (Farelnik 2020: 24-25).

The above-mentioned pillars of the Cittaslow concept relate to areas in which the competitiveness of a small city is built. This is a creative, entrepreneurial local com-

munity, engaged in the process of making decisions about the projects implemented in their city, and the local authorities, aware of the requirements and benefits connected with the adoption of this model for the development of their city, which contribute to building the city in a way corresponding to contemporary demands and able to meet national and global challenges. A chance for the development of small cities arises from adopting a certain philosophy of growth (in the spirit of *slow*) and active exploitation of opportunities that appear owing to the networked cooperation, which is expected to develop among Cittaslow member cities.

Cittaslow is an association which unites the mayors of small and medium-size cities, with a population of up to 50,000. To join the Cittaslow network, a city must successfully pass through a certification process and satisfy 50%+1 assessment criteria, which pertain to seven key areas: energy and environmental policy, infrastructure policies, quality of urban life policies, agricultural, tourism and artisan policies, hospitality policies, awareness and training, social cohesion, partnerships (*Cittaslow International Charter* 2017: 25-27).

One of the aims in the development of Cittaslow cities is the cooperation and exchange of best municipal practices among the member cities. The experience gained by the Slow Food and Cittaslow movements has given rise to a new cultural and scientific approach to such issues as: from food to farming, from farming to natural environment, from natural environment to housing, suitable for easy and pleasant life rather than elitism (*Cittaslow – International network of cities...* 2019: 1-11). Cittaslow is a manifestation of the new awareness of urban residents, including the value attached to time, informed consumption (Clancy 2017: 63-68), respecting cultural heritage and natural environment, and – in a broader view – respecting human rights. The idea of Cittaslow favours the development of smaller cities, which are also an important component of regional economies, recognized as such in the policies of individual states and that of the European Union.

## The Polish National Cittaslow Network

The Cittaslow network in Poland began to grow in 2004, when the Polish city Reszel joined the international network of slow cities. The cities which followed Reszel in 2007, thereby helping to create the Polish National Cittaslow Network, are Bisztynek, Biskupiec and Lidzbark Warmiński. All the Polish National Cittaslow Network founder cities are situated in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province. There are 22 more member cities in the same province (Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Braniewo, Dobrze Miasto, Działdowo, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Lidzbark, Lubawa, Morąg, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olecko, Olsztynek, Orneta, Pasym, Ryn, Sępólno, Szczytno, Węgorzewo, Wydminy). The Polish National Cittaslow Network also includes Głubczyce and Prudnik (Opolskie Province), Kalety (Śląskie Province), Murowana Goślina (Wielkopolskie Province), Nowy Dwór Gdański (Pomorskie Province), Rejowiec Fabryczny (Lubelskie Province), Rzgów (Łódzkie Province), Sianów (Zachodniopomorskie Province) and

Sierpc (Mazowieckie Province). In 2020, the number of inhabitants of the individual cities belonging to the Polish Cittaslow Network ranged from approximately 1,800 and 23,000. A total of 9 cities had a population of less than 5,000; 8 – between 5,000 and 10,000 residents; 10 – between 10,000 and 15,000 residents; 4 – between 15,000 and 20,000 residents; 4 – over 20,000 residents (Local Data Bank of Statistics Poland 2021). The number of residents is shown as per city (that is for an urban municipality or a city in an urban-rural municipality). Only the status of Wydminy is different because it is a rural municipality.

The cooperation between member cities of the Polish National Cittaslow Network is constantly developing. The cities collaborate in such areas as promotional campaigns, organization of cultural events, exchange of experience and know-how. The institution which has been supporting the Polish National Cittaslow Network since its foundation is the Marshal's Office of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province in Olsztyn. Recently, another organ of the local government, such as the District of Olsztyn, has also been awarded the status of a supporting member of the association.

Cities belonging to the Polish National Cittaslow Network have many cultural heritage resources, which are typical of Warmia and Mazury Region. For example, in Lidzbark Warmiński, which is one of the first Cittaslow towns in the region, these are Collegiate Church of Saints Peter and Paul Apostles (Photo 1) or Orangerie of Culture (Photo 2), in Bartoszyce, which is one of the largest Cittaslow towns – The Old Town (Photo 3) with Lidzbark's Gate (Photo 4).



Photo 1. Collegiate Church of the Saint Peter and Paul Apostles in Lidzbark Warmiński (Photo by: E. FarelNIK)



Photo 2. Orangery of Culture in Lidzbark Warmiński (Photo by: E. Farelnik)



Photo 3. The Old Town in Bartoszyce (Photo by: E. Farelnik)



Photo 4. Lidzbark's Gate in Bartoszyce (Photo by: E. Farelnik)



Resources of the tangible and intangible heritage are the basis for the development of the tourist product of cities in Poland (Król 2021: 4; Murzyn-Kupisz et al. 2019: 42-43). However, valuable historic resources of Cittaslow cities very often require revitalization (Jaszczak et al. 2021: 1-24; Farelnik 2021: 177-179). An example of networked cooperation between the member cities is the execution of the program called “The supralocal program for revitalization of the network of Cittaslow cities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province”. This project brings together 19 cities, such as Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Dobre Miasto, Działdowo, Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Lidzbark, Lidzbark Warmiński, Lubawę, Nidzicę, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olsztyn, Orneta, Pasym, Reszel and Ryn. The objective is to achieve coordinated and complex revitalization of the above-mentioned Cittaslow cities in a way that will enable them to preserve their unique character and assets, while simultaneously offer better standards of living to the residents. The program has received the funding at the amount of over Euro 51 million under the umbrella of the Regional Operational Programme of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province for the years 2014-2020. The execution of this supralocal revitalization program is coordinated by the Association Polish Cittaslow Cities, set up in 2015. Revitalization activities have an impact on the

improvement of the quality of life, achieved thanks to the availability of social and cultural services at a higher level, and the improvement of the aesthetics and functionality of historic city centers. The effect of this type of activities may also be economic activation, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises (in gastronomy, hotel industry, trade and services) and building the Cittaslow potential for the development of tourism.

## The Chinese National Cittaslow Network

The Chinese National Cittaslow Network has been developing since 2010, when the first city in China, Yaxi, joined the Cittaslow association. Nowadays, the Chinese National Cittaslow Network has 13 members (*Cittaslow List* 2021: 2): Changjia (Gaoqing County), Changshan – Zigang, Erdaobaihe (Changbai Mountain), Fuli (Fuchuan Yao Autonomous County), Jingyang (Jingde County), Luzhi (Wuzhong District), Maolin (Yudong New District), Shimenshan (Qufu city), Songbai (Shennongjia Forest District), Yanyang (Meizhou city), Yaxi (Gaochun County), Yingpan (Zhashui County), Yuhu (Wencheng County).

The slow cities in China show certain similarities between their development (the development of agriculture, industries and tourism) and the major directions, and measures taken for the sake of the further growth of slow cities are mostly the responsibility of local authorities. As the development of the Cittaslow network in China is at its early stage, the main problem is to determine the way these cities should develop, i.e. to elaborate a Chinese concept of a slow city (Shi et al. 2019: 1273-1274) rather than to maintain the pace of growth of the national network.

The main factors that condition the development of the Cittaslow network in China are:

1. Political circumstances, including the policy of the country's spatial development and related urbanization processes (the risk of transforming small cities into large agglomerations);
2. The permanence of the policy adopted by the authorities and the pursued vision of the development of cities and the entire network, stemming from the assumption of the slow city model and the regulation of Cittaslow International;
3. An opportunity for the development of the Cittaslow network in China lies in the thoughtful improvement of the quality of life (especially in terms of the accessibility to rural areas) and creation of local tourism offers based on local culture and tradition, small businesses run by local producers and service providers;
4. Internal migrations for work, outflow of local craftsmen;
5. The level of wealth of the Chinese population and growth of the middle class;
6. Considerable differentiation in the socio-economic potential in eastern and western parts of China may result in an uneven, in the spatial sense, development of the slow city model;
7. Knowledge, understanding and identification with the slow city development model among residents;

8. Restrictions in international flow of tourists and the state's visa policy;
9. Active participation of the representatives of Chinese Cittaslow cities in international structures of the Cittaslow International Association and successful promotion of Cittaslow cities in the country and abroad;
10. The risk of excessive tourist flow stimulated by trends in world tourism and the popularity of the slow city concept, coupled with the risk of excessive burden on and even destruction of unique local wildlife and cultural resources;
11. Increasing popularity of the LOHAS philosophy and sustainable consumption in China and in the world. This philosophy is reflected in the growing interest in health, fitness, good social relations and natural environment. Its possible consequence could be juvenalization, i.e. the cult of youth, striving for a healthy life and prolonging longevity, wellness (slow), i.e. striving for harmony between the body, spirit and mind, slowing down the pace of life, and connectivity, i.e. the need to belong to larger social groups, interest in voluntary work and other forms of social involvement (Kielczewski 2012: 81-82).

An interesting example of the implementation of the slow city model in China is the project to create a new Cittaslow city from scratch, initiated in 2017. The project of building the city Changshan relies on a vision based on the sense of identity with the place, collaboration with residents of five villages, sustainable development of the environment and shared social responsibility. The project is planned to cover an area of 740,000 km<sup>2</sup>, mostly hilly with rich vegetation and water resources. The following functions are envisaged: slow leisure (spending leisure time, learning about the local culture), slow ecology (protection of local resources of the natural environment), slow traffic (slow traffic of pedestrians and cyclists) and slow life (slow living, handicrafts, local customs). The total amount of investment is RMB 5 billion (*A new urban planning 'slow'...* 2017: 1-3).

## The Polish and the Chinese slow city development models

The Polish Cittaslow Network has been developing for a longer time than the Chinese counterpart. A comparison of the first 10 years of the existence of both networks reveals a much more rapid rate of growth in the number of Cittaslow cities in Poland. Changes in the number of member cities in the Polish and Chinese Cittaslow Networks are illustrated in Diagram 1.

The Polish Cittaslow Network was established earlier because the model of development proposed by small Italian cities first gained approval among cities in Europe (Farelnik, Stanowicka and Wierzbicka 2017: 415-425; Gruszecka-Tieśluk 2013: 383-393; Strzelecka 2017: 13-41; Wierzbicka 2020: 203-224; Zadecka 2018: 84-106; Zielińska-Szczepkowska 2019: 301-316). Transfer of this model to Asia (to China) can be seen as a subsequent step in building the international network around the world. The main features of the Polish and the Chinese Cittaslow Network are compiled in Table 1.

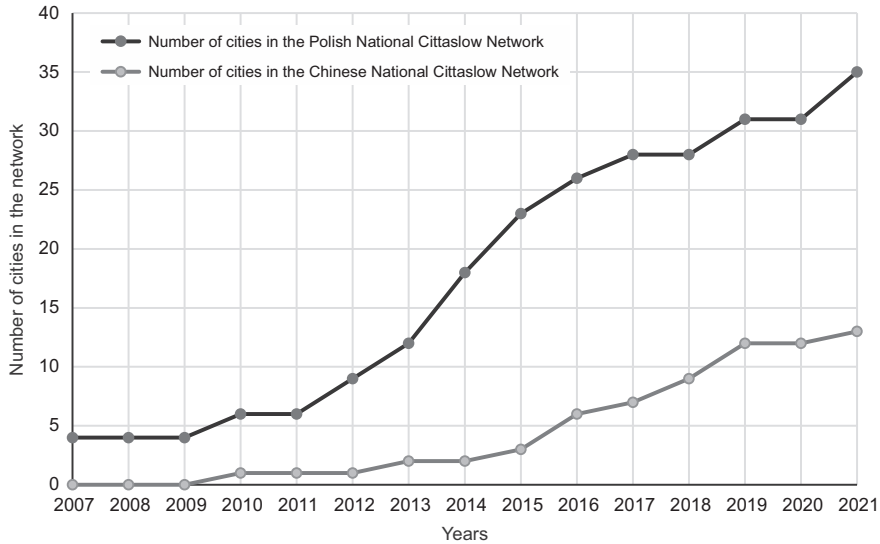


Diagram 1. Development of the Polish and the Chinese Cittaslow Network in 2007-2021

Source: developed by the author, based on Cittaslow List (2007-2021: 1-10).

Table 1

Comparison of the Polish and the Chinese Cittaslow model

Specification	Polish Cittaslow Network	Chinese Cittaslow Network
Genesis	Model for the development of cities adapted from the Italian Cittaslow Network 2004 – the first city in Poland joins the Cittaslow network (Reszel) 2007 – the Polish National Cittaslow Network is founded	Model for the development of cities borrowed from the European Cittaslow cities (mainly the Italian network) 2008 – the beginning of promotional activities to popularize the slow city model in China 2010 – first Cittaslow member in China (Yaxi)
Level of management	Local level	Supralocal level
Character of the territorial unit	Small and medium-sized cities and one rural municipality. The network now unites cities with a population between 2,000 to 23,000. The average size of a member city is around 10,000 residents	Urban areas and rural areas large in size
Character of the network	Cities different in terms of socio-economic development, mainly concentrated in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province (26 out of 35 member cities), while single cities scattered in other provinces. The network now has two supporting members and one Cittaslow friend member	Similarity of the level of socio-economic development, a gap in the development between the rural and urban areas, poor economic base; cities located far from one another; member cities mostly situated in the east of China

Table 1 contd.

Specification	Polish Cittaslow Network	Chinese Cittaslow Network
Local resources	Local cultural heritage, architectural resources, local identity and traditions, culinary offer	Natural landscape, local traditions, agriculture, often poor economic base
Development policy	Building an individual model for the development of a slow city, based on endogenous resources of this city; gaining benefits from collaboration within the network, mainly in tourism and promotion spheres. Measures taken by local governments, local communities and non-profit organizations	Model of development promoting ecological farming, rural tourism, festivals showing local traditions
Role of authorities	Access to the network is initiated by the authorities of a municipality or bottom-up initiative by the local community	The membership as well as the direction and pathway for the development of slow cities are defined in the top-down manner
Philosophy	There is a connection between the slow city model and the Slow Food philosophy and slow life philosophy	The slow philosophy is part of the traditional Chinese culture; the LOHAS culture

Source: developed by the author.

One of the differences between the Chinese and European slow city is the original motivation for implementing this development model. In Europe, it is mostly a spontaneous, bottom-up decision, made to preserve local traditions and improve living standards. The creation and development of Chinese slow cities are supervised by supralocal authorities. Market-orientated measures serve to stimulate the economic growth and sustainable development of a city (Shi et al. 2019: 1274).

## Summary

Cities around the world, by joining the Cittaslow network and adopting the slow city model of development, reflect a novel approach to building the economic growth of cities, which is based on such pillars as the development of a global network of mutually collaborating regional communities, pursuit of economic activities with a global reach on the basis of local resources and using regional networks, generation of jobs corresponding to the needs of local communities and, finally, employment of regional collaboration to renew and revitalize socio-economic capacity (Blakely 2016: 57).

The above analysis of the Polish and Chinese Cittaslow Network proves that the development of such a network may run along different pathways. Differences can stem from varied economic potential of cities as much as different national and regional (political, cultural, social) circumstances. The slow city model of development can evolve in highly different ways, which means that every city is seeking the best solutions,

adapted to the given conditions, but in line with the Cittaslow underlying principles and the spirit of slow philosophy.

The main differences between the Polish and the Chinese Cittaslow Network are associated with the cultural differences between these countries, different political systems and different administrative divisions. The Polish model of the development of a Cittaslow member city is closer to the European one (based mostly on the experiences gained by the network in Italy). On the other hand, in China, it was impossible to adopt the European model as it stood, mostly because of the spatial, cultural and political differences mentioned before. In European cities, an idea to join a Cittaslow network is most often driven bottom-up (in Poland, it is an initiative taken by local authorities and – less often – by residents of an applicant city). In China, the proponents of the idea to develop a national Cittaslow network were the central authorities. In both networks, irrespective of the stage in their development, it seems to be necessary to take measures in order to raise the level of awareness, approval and rooting of the Cittaslow concept among residents of cities, as this is the key internal factor leading to successful implementation of the slow city idea and permanent development based thereon.

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