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## REVITALISATION AS A TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SLOW CITY (CITTASLOW)

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*Received 18 August 2021; accepted 15 October 2021; published 30 December 2021*

**Abstract.** Cities and regions are struggling with social, economic, ecological, and spatial problems, which often accumulate in the historical centers, industrial areas, and degraded residential housing estates. A possible solution is to implement revitalisation measures as an instrument to activate the socio-economic functions of degraded (crisis-stricken) areas. The aim of this article is to discuss the specific character of revitalisation processes in cities which are members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network, and to determine the role of revitalisation in the development of Polish slow cities as well as the extent to which this tool is used in the local and regional development policy within the Polish National Cittaslow Network. The results of the author's own study (a survey questionnaire addressed to mayors of Cittaslow cities in 2020) were presented against the background of the data on revitalisation measures taken by municipal governments, which were collected and reported by Statistics Poland. Beside individual revitalisation programs in Cittaslow member cities, there is an ongoing supralocal revitalisation program. This is an innovative approach to planning revitalisation efforts pursued simultaneously in several cities in one region. Moreover, the revitalisation measures and activation of crisis-stricken areas are pointed to as one of the major effects achieved owing to the membership in the Cittaslow network. This implicates that competition among cities in one region can evolve towards effective cooperation of cities. This transformation is important for building the resilience of slow cities, which play an increasingly growing role in the sustainable development of regions.

**Keywords:** revitalisation; city development; sustainable development; network of cities; Cittaslow; slow city

**Reference** to this paper should be made as follows: Farelnek, E. 2021. Revitalisation as a tool for the development of slow city (Cittaslow). *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 9(2), 169-185. [http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2021.9.2\(11\)](http://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2021.9.2(11))

**JEL Classifications:** O21, Q01, R51, R58

## 1. Introduction

The development of an international network of cities called the Cittaslow network has been gaining momentum in recent years. The ‘Cittaslow – International network of cities where living is good’ currently associates 272 cities from 30 countries. The Polish National Cittaslow Network, founded under the auspices of the Cittaslow movement, associates 34 members and is the second largest network of slow cities globally (second only to the Italian network) with regard to the number of member cities (*Cittaslow International List*, 2020, pp. 1, 7–8). By adopting the slow city development model, a city is offered a chance for a more dynamic development in line with the slow philosophy. This is especially true about smaller cities, which search for opportunities for development in the increasingly globalised world. A decision to follow the slow city model entails the need to look for such development tools which will enable a city to attain, in the best possible way, the set development goals, arising from the accepted philosophy, and which can ensure that the city’s development is sustainable; it will also contribute to the creation of a compact and resilient city, friendly to its inhabitants. Revitalisation of some (crisis-stricken) area of a city is an example of such a tool (see Brodziński & Kurowska, 2021, pp. 1–15; Farelnek *et al.*, 2020, pp. 118–135; Farelnek *et al.*, 2021, pp. 145–164).

There are few studies available today that pertain to the issue of how revitalisation can be used as a local development instrument in the entire Cittaslow network. Most research is selective in the sense of dealing with just one or a few cities which belong to the Cittaslow network. More complex revision of revitalisation processes carried out so far in the Polish Cittaslow network member cities would therefore provide important information for comparative analyses of the course of such processes among national Cittaslow networks, operating under the umbrella of the international Cittaslow association. And Poland is a valuable research object in this regard because the Polish Cittaslow network is one of the largest national networks in the world.

The purpose of the article has been to discuss the specific character of revitalisation processes in cities which are members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network, to identify the importance of revitalisation in the development of the Polish slow cities, and to determine the extent to which this tool is employed in the local development policy in the Polish National Cittaslow Network. The research object consisted of revitalisation processes in cities which are members of the Polish Cittaslow network, and the research subject was composed of 31 cities, members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network. The following research methods were employed: a critical analysis of the literature, a diagnostic survey method, and an inductive reasoning method.

The paper comprises the following parts: theoretical background, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusions. The theoretical background section describes the origin and idea of the international and national Cittaslow networks, and characterises the specific aspects of revitalisation of small cities in Poland. The next section, dedicated to methodology, discusses the research methods applied to characterise revitalisation processes occurring in the Polish Cittaslow network member cities. Afterwards, the results of the study performed to analyse the course are presented, along with the effects of revitalisation projects as well as their role in the local development policy in Cittaslow cities. The subsequent section, discussion, is where the current research outcomes are referred to studies carried out by other authors, and where certain possible applications of these results are indicated. The article ends with conclusions, including suggestions for further research.

## 2. Theoretical background

The origin of the International Cittaslow Network can be sought in the growing popularity of the Slow Food movement and the initiative undertaken by mayors of four small Italian cities: Bra, Greve in Chianti, Orvieto and Positano, who explored an opportunity for the development of the cities they governed in adopting such model of a city. The name Cittaslow comes from the *città* (Italian word mean ‘a city’) and the English word *slow*.

‘Cittaslow – International network of cities where living is good’ was founded in 1999 in Orvieto, Italy. The Cittaslow Association is a not-for-profit entity, and its objectives are to promote and spread the culture of good living through research, testing and the application of solutions for the city organisation. Identity, memory, environmental protection, justice, social inclusion, and community, as well as active citizenship are among the values which the association promotes. The organs of the Cittaslow Association are: International Assembly, International Coordinating Committee, International President, President Council, Board of Guarantors and, the International Scientific Committee. The association can be aided by the so-called ‘Supporters of Cittaslow’ (regions, provinces, towns, cantons, metropolises, unions of municipalities, etc.) and ‘Friends of Cittaslow’ (*Cittaslow International Charter*, 2017, p. 5, 8–11).

Cities animated by people ‘curious about time reclaimed’, rich in squares, theatres, workshops, cafes, restaurants, spiritual places, unspoilt landscapes and fascinating craftsmen, where we still appreciate the slow, benevolent succession of the seasons, with their rhythm of authentic products, respecting fine flavours and health, the spontaneity of their rituals, the fascination of living traditions. This is the joy of a slow, quiet, reflective way of life (*Cittaslow Manifesto*, 2020, p. 1).

The *European Manifest Cittaslow* (2012, pp. 1–2) emphasised that the Cittaslow safeguards the quality of life for its citizens. This is combined with devoting much attention to traditions that are linked to modern techniques. A Cittaslow city is a conscious community which appreciates its own qualities. Cittaslow invests in the awareness of its own citizens and entrepreneurs, in order to safeguard the valuable aspects of their own community. Qualities are often appreciated most when they have disappeared; a Cittaslow will prevent this from happening. A Cittaslow invests in sustainability and quality, ensures that the cultural history and community values are maintained and strengthened, promotes bioarchitecture, biological agriculture and biodiversity of the landscape, focuses on traditionally produced products, objects and crafts but also stimulates innovative techniques (supports traditional production and stimulates the development of regional products). A Cittaslow ensures the vitality of the communities and the facilities of the communities are maintained, opts for sustainable solutions – all good things are maintained and this should not have a negative effect on the development of future generations.

The Cittaslow network activity rest on five pillars (*Cittaslow – International network...*, 2019, pp. 5–6):

1. The positive side of slowness – life in accord with one’s own natural rhythm, thoughtful production, consumption, taking care of cultural heritage and social relationships;
2. Circular economy – economy in a closed circuit, taking care of natural resources, lower consumption, recycling, cooperation with entrepreneurs, and farmers in this scope;
3. Resilience – adoption of shared aims in the development of slow cities, concerning their current and future growth, which is pivotal to what their social and economic development will be like in the future (also for future generations);
4. Social justice – the right of a community to use local resources and the principles of social justice;
5. Sustainability and culture – responsible use of natural resources, taking care of cultural heritage and nurturing tradition.

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).

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 34 member cities, 25 of which lie in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, including 4 founder cities: Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Lidzbark Warmiński, Reszel, and several others: Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Braniewo, Dobrze Miasto, Działdowo,

Gołdap, Górowo Iławeckie, Jeziorany, Lidzbark, Lubawa, Morąg, Nidzica, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, Olecko, Olsztynek, Orneta, Pasym, Ryn, Sępólno, Szczytno, and Wydminy. There are 2 cities from the Opolskie Voivodeship (Głubczyce, Prudnik); 1 city from each of the following voivodeships: Mazowieckie (Sierpc), 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 (Government of the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship). In 2019, the Olsztyn County joined the group of supporting members. The first 'Cittaslow Friend' in Poland is the Grupa Meblowa Szynaka, operating in the towns of Cittaslow – Lubawa, Lidzbark and Nowe Miasto Lubawskie.

The Cittaslow cities employ a variety of tools in order to shape conditions for their development according to the guidelines of the slow city model. An example of such an instrument is planned and targeted revitalisation of the part of a city which, following a complex diagnosis covering social, economic and spatial spheres, has been recognised as being in need for intervention and activation. It seems that such intervention and activation should evolve from and serve the slow city's vision rather than be in contradiction with it.

Revitalisation of urban areas is a complex, multi-faceted process. Currently, Polish researchers most frequently refer to the statutory definition of revitalisation, which states that it is 'a process of assisting degraded areas in overcoming a crisis through integrated measures for the benefit of the local community, space and economy, focused on a given area and performed by revitalisation stakeholders on the basis of the municipal revitalisation programme' (*The act on revitalisation*, 2015, paragraph 2, p. 1). This process, especially in English language references, is also called urban regeneration, which means: 'comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change' (Roberts & Sykes, 2000, p. 17).

Revitalisation can contribute to the achievement of many effects emerging in the social, economic and spatial spheres in a city. These outcomes can be direct and revealed in a short time after completing a revitalisation programme, or else can be indirect and emerge over longer time horizon. Effects connected with the social sphere could consist of (Bartłomiejski & Kowalewski, 2019, pp. 1–10; Doroz-Turek, 2019, pp. 2–11; Konior & Pokojaska, 2020, p. 15; Mazur-Belzyt, 2017, pp. 3–7):

- greater engagement of residents and their social participation, thereby developing a civic society,
- creating local identity,
- improved accessibility and quality of social and cultural infrastructure,
- cultivating and preserving local traditions and cultural heritage,
- establishing institutions intended to stimulate social, cultural and occupational activity among the residents,
- better quality of life in the city,
- better knowledge of slow philosophy among the inhabitants of a slow city,
- alleviating social problems (poverty, social exclusion, gentrification).

Likely effects in the economic sphere are (Nowakowska & Grodzicka-Kowalczyk, 2019, pp. 15–19; Senetra & Szarek-Iwaniuk, 2020, p. 13; Skalski, 2018, pp. 248–257):

- giving an economic boost to degraded areas, for example, disused industrial, railway or military facilities,
- development of entrepreneurship, including business enterprises guided by slow philosophy,
- higher incomes for residents, for example, owing to the growth in tourism and services,

- greater specialisation and development of network cooperation, particularly as regards the creation of a tourism product for the Cittaslow network cities as well as promotional campaigns for both the cities and the entire network,
- sharing good practice and maintaining networked cooperation between cities as regards revitalisation programmes and their effects,
- expanding the range of ‘city’s products’ in the broad sense of this term,
- attracting investors interested in revitalised areas,
- new jobs,
- higher value of real estate properties in a revitalised area,
- higher tax revenues earned by the city,
- promotion of the city and building the image of a slow city,
- transformation of the city’s economic system towards circular economy.

Some of the effects that appear in the spheres of urban space and environment are as follows (Farelnik & Stanowicka, 2016, pp. 364–369; Hołuj, 2016, pp. 116–120; Jaszczak *et al.*, 2019, pp. 43–44; Jaszczak *et al.*, 2020, pp. 7–9; Jaszczak & Kristianova, 2019, pp. 8–9; Sas-Bojarska, 2017, pp. 12–13; Zagroba, 2016, p. 728; Zagroba *et al.*, 2020, pp. 4–17):

- improved visual appeal, cohesion, and functionality of public spaces, especially historic centres of cities,
- increased use of innovative solutions in urban infrastructure, increased use of alternative sources of energy and other pro-ecological solutions, also in transport and small street architecture,
- creating friendlier and safer spaces, better suited to cater for the needs of various social groups,
- spatial integration of a revitalised area with the remaining parts of the city,
- more cycle paths and better quality of cycling infrastructure,
- transformation of a city towards green city, eco-city and even smart city – creating the green and blue infrastructure.

Because of a variety of aspects it presents, a wide range of impact and a multitude of stakeholders engaged, revitalisation of urban areas can contribute to the development of a city and improvement of the quality of life of its residents. Through revitalisation, changes can be made that will allow residents to satisfy their needs better as well as contributing to the creation of new values, examples of which are new products, goods, services meant to satisfy local needs, new companies, creating new jobs, non-material values, such as: knowledge, qualifications and skills, human capital, attractive locations for economic and cultural activities and quality of the surroundings (compare Green Leigh & Blakely, 2013, pp. 71–96; McCann, 2016, pp. 127–144). More specifically, the core values of cities include human capital and social capital, cultural resources and cultural heritage, tourism and hospitality functions, attainment of the characteristics assigned to the concept of a creative city (e.g. the desideratum of diversity, desideratum of equality, understood as the lack of discrimination), the ability to interact and cooperate, financial potential, power potential (being in control, decision-making centre, skill of creating partnerships and atmosphere of cooperation), knowledge potential (ability to create new things, creativity and innovativeness), capability of shaping opinions by various institutions, creating the brand of a place, image, *genius loci*. These assets also play an important role in the process of developing a slow city. What truly matters in this context is anything which is local, endogenous, different, diverse, traditional, and emphasising the identity of a given city and region. Hence the aims of revitalisation of Cittaslow cities needs to take into account the preservation of their local assets (compare Zawadzka, 2017, pp. 101–104; Jaszczak *et al.*, 2021, pp. 1–24; Marks-Bielska *et al.*, 2020, pp. 463–487).

Considering the research subject, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that positive effects obtained from a revitalisation project can translate into an improved degree of the city fulfilling certification criteria, i.e. parameters of an assessment an applicant city is submitted to by the Cittaslow association, as well as re-certification, i.e. a repeated assessment made after 5 years of the city’s membership in the network. 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 (*Cittaslow International Charter*, 2017, pp. 25–27). Particularly significant in this context could be revitalisation projects planned and implemented after the slow city concept has been added to the local development policy. Owing to planned revitalisation measures, a city can achieve a series of effects in the areas that are evaluated during subsequent recertifications. Thus, when planning to stimulate a city which develops in line with slow philosophy by revitalising selected urban areas, such programmes can be directed towards the achievement of effects in the areas which certification covers, i.e. 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.

Apart from the possible outcomes of revitalisation in Cittaslow cities mentioned above, which mainly concern single cities, worth noticing is the fact that revitalisation can generate positive effects in a larger groups of cities (e.g. creation of a network tourism product, increased socio-economic potential, promotion of cities) and even have a visible influence over an entire region, especially one like Warmia and Mazury, where the highest number of slow cities in whole Poland is situated. Cittaslow member cities undergoing revitalisation can become one of the main image products of this region (*Strategy of tourism development...*, 2016, p. 43). Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to ignore threats and negative consequences of urban revitalisation processes, which in the Cittaslow network member cities may include: ghettoisation of an area of the city undergoing revitalisation, or else turning the whole city into an 'open air museum', excessive tourism traffic, and consequently excessive burden on the city's infrastructure and historical buildings, loss of precious, endogenous resources.

### **3. Methodology**

The literature research confirms that revitalisation in small cities can be an effective instrument applied for their development. An important factor in the perception and analysis of this issue could be the network perspective, where cities can undertake revitalisation efforts collaboratively and revitalisation effects can be networked and synergistic, that is present not in just one but in a group of cities. An example is revitalisation carried out in the Polish Cittaslow cities, which belong to the Association 'Polish Cittaslow Cities'.

The aim of the study was to discuss the specific character of revitalisation processes in cities which are members of the Polish National Cittaslow Network, to evaluate the importance of revitalisation for the development of Polish slow cities, and to determine to what extent revitalisation is used as an instrument in the local development policy of the Polish National Cittaslow Network.

The applied research methods were a critical literature analysis, and an analysis of the results of a questionnaire survey. The survey, carried out in May 2020, was based on a standardised questionnaire, which contained closed and open questions. It was addressed to mayors of all member cities of the Polish Cittaslow Network: Barczewo, Bartoszyce, Biskupiec, Bisztynek, Braniewo, Dobrze 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, Sępólno, Sierpc, Sianów, and Wydminy. It was returned by all network member cities. Therefore, the study was of a comprehensive character and comprised all the units belonging to the studied population (at that time, there were 31 Cittaslow cities). Admittedly, a weakness of the study is that it relied on opinions of just one type of stakeholders engaged in revitalisation (i.e. local authorities). The conclusions, however, were also based on data from Statistics Poland, which concerned the revitalisation programs implemented in all Polish municipalities (*Statistical data on revitalisation...*, 2018).

The study also employed a method of critical analysis of the literature and an inductive reasoning method. The critical review of the scientific literature included Polish and English language references that raised the issues of the *slow city* development model, development of the international and Polish National Cittaslow Network, as well as potential effects and the role of revitalisation process. The inductive reasoning method was used to formulate conclusions drawn from the review of the relevant literature and from the empirical studies performed by the author.

#### 4. Results

Thus far, revitalisation measures in Cittaslow cities have been based on separate revitalisation programmes in individual cities or on a supralocal document concerning the revitalisation of 19 slow cities, i.e. *Supralocal revitalisation program for the network of Cittaslow cities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship*, developed in 2015 and updated in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Revitalisation programs in cities of the Polish National Cittaslow Network

Year of admission	City	Type of territorial unit <sup>1</sup>	Voivodeship	Total population in 2019	Type of revitalisation program <sup>2</sup>	Duration of revitalisation program
2007	Biskupiec	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	10,634	RP	2016-2020
	Biszynek	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	2,359	PP	2015-2020
	Lidzbark Warmiński	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	15,697	RP	2016-2023
	Reszel	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	4,550	RP	2016-2023
2010	Murowana Goślina	urban-rural	Wielkopolskie	10,433	RP	2013-2020
	Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	10,850	RP	2016-2023
2012	Lubawa	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	10,388	RP	2015-2024
	Olsztynek	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	7,514	RP	2016-2025
	Ryn	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	2,843	RP	2016-2023
2013	Barczewo	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	7,501	RP	2016-2023
	Dobre Miasto	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	10,182	RP	2016-2023
	Gołdap	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	13,708	RP	2017-2020
2014	Górowo Iławeckie	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	3,940	RP	2016-2023
	Kalety	urban	Śląskie	8,589	RP	2012-2020
	Nidzica	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	13,694	RP	2017-2020
	Nowy Dwór Gdański	urban-rural	Pomorskie	9,888	MRP	2017-2023
	Pasym	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	2,498	RP	2015-2020
	Rejowiec Fabryczny	urban	Lubelskie	4,386	RP	2017-2023
2015	Bartoszyce	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	23,284	RP	2016-2022
	Działdowo	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	21,274	RP	2015-2020
	Lidzbark	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	7,741	RP	2016-2022
	Orneta	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	8,723	RP	2016-2021
	Prudnik	urban-rural	Opolskie	20,989	RP	2017-2023
2016	Głubczyce	urban-rural	Opolskie	12,521	RP	2016-2020
	Jeziorany	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	3,153	MRP	2017-2020
	Sępólno	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	1,941	-	-
2017	Rzgów	urban-rural	Łódzkie	3,371	RP	2017-2023
	Sianów	urban-rural	Zachodniopomorskie	6,621	RP	2017-2023
2019	Braniewo	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	16,992	RP	2017-2022
	Sierpc	urban	Mazowieckie	17,933	RP	2017-2025
	Wydminy	rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	6,233	-	-
2020	Morąg	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	13,701	RP	2017-2023
	Olecko	urban-rural	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	16,422	-	-
	Szczytno	urban	Warmińsko-Mazurskie	23,088	RP	2017-2020

<sup>1</sup> urban-rural (a city located in urban-rural commune), urban (municipal commune), rural (rural commune)

<sup>2</sup> MPR – municipal revitalisation program, RP – revitalisation program

Source: the author, based on Local Data Bank (2020) and *Statistical data on revitalisation...* (2018)

The overarching objectives of revitalisation measures envisaged in the mentioned supralocal programme were: to support social inclusion, combat poverty and to improve the quality of life of local communities living in some problem areas. More specific aims are: greater social capital of the city, creating proper conditions for revitalisation projects, protection of cultural heritage, improved quality of the natural environment, reinforced local economy (creating good conditions for the development of tourism and hospitality business, commerce and services, local retailers and restaurants, etc., by revitalising the public space, creating the environment in which entities supporting occupational activity and improvement of professional qualifications can operate), revitalisation and modernisation of the public space (for example, restoration of a previous or creation of a new function, formation of the conditions conducive to the sustainable development of a given area based on its characteristic assets, improvement of the quality of life and living conditions for residents, greater social cohesion by eliminating poverty, alleviating inequalities, increased employment rate and social integration), renovation and refurbishment of buildings, improved residential housing conditions, better conditions for education, science and culture, improved social welfare infrastructure, formation and support of social networks (creating favourable conditions for a stronger sense of local identity, supporting social programmes and initiatives) (*Supralocal revitalisation program...*, 2020, pp. 46–48). During revitalisation, it is expected that the implemented measures will produce medium- and long-term positive effect in social, economic, environmental, spatio-functional and technical spheres (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Vision of revitalised areas in Cittaslow cities

Sphere	Effects of the revitalisation of a slow city
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permanent effects will be achieved owing to a broad-scale social integration of ‘problem groups’ and abolishment of discrimination and social exclusion</li> <li>- The need to coordinate the work of different revitalisation process participants will facilitate more vigorous public dialogue and formation of civic attitudes</li> <li>- Cooperation of institutions and persons engaged in revitalisation as well as the social effects of revitalisation measures will be a contributing factor in the achievement of the priority such as the ‘Open Society’ strategic region.</li> <li>- Improved quality of life of the city inhabitants will fulfil the so-called marketing promise included in the promoted region’s brand ‘healthy life, pure benefit’</li> <li>- Use of the existing possibilities to acquire financial support from the structural funds and their further effective optimisation as well as integrated measures will contribute to the alleviation of crisis events in revitalised areas</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suitable conditions will be created for the local economy to operate and grow</li> <li>- There will be improvement in competences of the local inhabitants in terms of their participation in the labour market, development of local enterprises, creating new jobs, and consequently the unemployment rate on revitalised areas will decrease</li> <li>- Increased occupational activation of inhabitants will be achieved by raising their qualifications and enhancing the quality of education</li> <li>- Enlivenment of economy in revitalised areas will become a component part in the achievement of one of the region’s strategic priorities, i.e. ‘Competitive Economy’</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Execution of thermal insulation projects will reduce primary energy consumption in revitalised public buildings and decrease the demand for heat power, which will lead to lower emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere</li> </ul>
Spatial and functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Owing to the revitalisation and refurbishment of public space, it will gain higher value and will be more appealing to visitors and inhabitants, in addition to which it will offer better conditions for locating commerce, services or cultural functions, which will create a chance to strengthen the local economy permanently</li> <li>- As a result, the image of the revitalised area will be improved distinctly, also leading to some positive changes in neighbouring areas</li> <li>- Cooperation between cities will bring about a positive effect, thereby being an impulse stimulating further development of the network and the concept of the sustainable development of the network, which will be a contributing factor to the achievement of the region called ‘Modern Networks’.</li> <li>- An ecofriendly approach to revitalisation will generate directly positive effects on the living conditions for</li> </ul>



	<p>residents and on the appeal of the revitalised area for tourists and investors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of public space will act as a positive stimulus to private owners of the real property in and around the revitalised area, and an impulse to subsequent investments, while professional performance of revitalisation projects will instil a positive attitude in the local community to revitalisation issues, and will create a good atmosphere for further revitalisation measures</li> <li>- By building a modern system for foot and cycle traffic, suitable conditions will appear for more intensive promotion of ecofriendly means of transport and will enhance the attractiveness of public places</li> <li>- Revitalisation measures conducted simultaneously in several locations will help the Cittaslow cities to become more visible on both regional and national maps, which in turn will make a beneficial contribution to all promotional campaigns</li> </ul>
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By executing complex thermal insulation projects, it will be possible to improve the quality of residential resources in the revitalised area, while the revitalisation of infrastructure will improve its accessibility and functionality</li> </ul>

Source: the author, based on the *Supralocal revitalisation program...* (2020, pp. 49–50)

The supralocal revitalisation programme took into consideration various types of revitalisation measures, with the focus on spatial, economic or social aspects, where the aim was to improve the quality of life of the local community dwelling in an area undergoing revitalisation (Table 3).

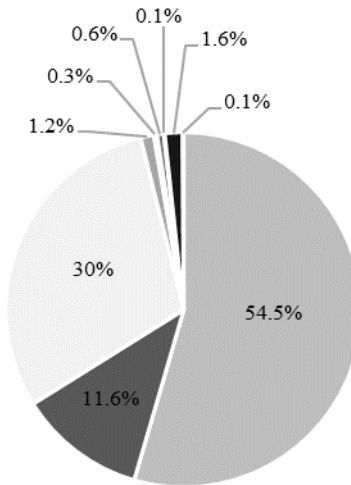
**Table 3.** Examples of revitalisation projects conducted in Cittaslow member cities

City	Name of project
Barczewo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Founding the Centre for Many Cultures</li> <li>- Landscaping the Pisa River banks</li> <li>- Founding the Activisation Centre</li> </ul>
Bartoszyce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of Bohaterow Westerplatte Square and the municipal park</li> <li>- Founding the Local Activation Centre</li> <li>- Conversion and adaptation of a former railway station</li> </ul>
Biskupiec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Founding the Educational Centre</li> <li>- Founding the Occupational Centre</li> <li>- Creating an improved offer of cultural and recreational events in the revitalised area of Biskupiec</li> <li>- Founding the Activated Mobility Centre (CAR) on Kraksy Lake</li> </ul>
Bisztynek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved availability of social services – refurbishment and adaptation of an existing building to serve a new, social function</li> <li>- Founding the Youths Social Integration Club</li> <li>- Adaptation of the Lidzbarska Gatehouse including the landscaping of the surrounding premises</li> </ul>
Dobre Miasto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of public space to serve social integration</li> <li>- Founding a centre affiliated to the Municipal Welfare Centre in Dobre Miasto – financial support to the services offered there and acquisition of necessary furniture and equipment</li> </ul>
Działdowo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of public space</li> </ul>
Gołdap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finishing the construction and furnishing the Culture Centre in Gołdap</li> <li>- Development of the waterfront along Gołdap Lake</li> <li>- ‘Under Good Wings’ – the Centre for the Support of Families</li> <li>- Conversion of an outbuilding to a pottery workshop, including furniture and equipment</li> </ul>
Górowo Iławeckie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of social space in the Old Town of Górowo Iławeckie</li> <li>- Major refurbishment of the degraded building of the Culture Centre in Górowo Iławeckie</li> <li>- Creating a recreational and sensory park around Garncarski Pond in Górowo Iławeckie</li> <li>- Revalorisation of the Młynówka River valley in Górowo Iławeckie</li> </ul>
Jeźiorany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of a historic park</li> </ul>
Lidzbark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of vacant plots along the Wel River</li> </ul>
Lidzbark Warmiński	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Founding the Occupational Activation Centre</li> <li>- Social and occupational activation owing to the modernisation of the amphitheatre and building the Centre of Handicrafts and Culture of Warmia</li> <li>- Development and landscaping of the Łyna River banks</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete refurbishment of multi-flat buildings concerning power supply and insulation</li> </ul>
Lubawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Founding a social activity centre at the Castle of the Chelm Bishops</li> <li>- Refurbishment and modernisation of the public space within the Old Town</li> </ul>
Nidzica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of the centre of Nidzica – reconstruction of the market square in the centre of the city</li> <li>- Refurbishment of the castle and the landscaping of the castle hill in Nidzica</li> <li>- Organisation of workshops and educational, occupational and social events for persons at risk of social exclusion in the revitalised area</li> <li>- Refurbishment of the park on the lake – landscaping work in the vicinity of the park</li> </ul>
Nowe Miasto Lubawskie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major refurbishment and adaptation of the building of the Municipal Culture Centre to open the Manufacture of Old Crafts</li> <li>- Refurbishment and adaptation of a former Lutheran church to open the Centre of Tourist Information and Promotion of Culture</li> <li>- Revitalisation of the market square in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie</li> <li>- Revitalisation of the municipal park</li> </ul>
Olsztynek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting up the Youth Social Integration Club called ‘Move and Learn’</li> <li>- Development and landscaping of the municipal beach</li> <li>- Contribution to the development of the region’s natural and cultural heritage by completing the refurbishment and modernisation of an old water pump</li> </ul>
Orneta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of the public space at the Franciszek Chruściel Municipal Centre of Culture in Orneta for cultural and recreational purposes</li> </ul>
Pasym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation and refurbishment of the Old Town square in Pasym – creation of a social integration and activation space</li> <li>- Founding the Social Activation Centre – a seat for the Social Integration Club</li> </ul>
Reszel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social and occupational activation of persons socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion</li> <li>- Development of the public space by restoring integration and recreational functions of the municipal park and its environs, including the improved functionality of avenues and paths within the park</li> </ul>
Ryn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revitalisation of a water pump, including its adaptation to new purpose</li> <li>- Revitalisation of the public space by creating squares with green areas and street architecture along the shorelines of Ryńskie Lake</li> <li>- Modernisation and adaptation of the rooms in a former nursery school to perform cultural, educational and other purposes, e.g. the Regional Park of Education, Culture and Tourism</li> </ul>

Source: the author, based on the *Supralocal revitalisation program...* (2020, pp. 64–142)

Statistics Poland provides data which prove that the revitalisation measures carried out to this day and based on either individual or supralocal programmes, have covered a total area of Cittaslow cities of nearly 3 750 ha. The total number of the population living in degraded areas of the Polish slow cities at the time these were distinguished exceeded 110 000 people (which equals 31% of the total population of all Polish Cittaslow cities). Revitalisation was mainly carried out in areas situated in and near the city centre (54.5%), less often away from the centre (11.6%) or in rural areas, which could occur in rural-urban municipalities (30%). The share of revitalised green areas, or disused industrial, railway or military properties was almost negligible (total 2.6%) (Figure 1).



- located near and in the city centre (residential areas together with associated services and transportation areas) – 54.5%
- located away from the city centre (residential areas together with associated services and transportation areas) – 11.6%
- located in rural areas (residential areas together with associated services and transportation areas) – 30.0%
- areas of former state farms or connected with agriculture and forestry – 1.2%
- disused railway areas – 0.3%
- former military areas – 0.6%
- other abandoned industrial premises – 0.1%
- green areas – 1.6%
- other areas, uninhabited – 0.1%

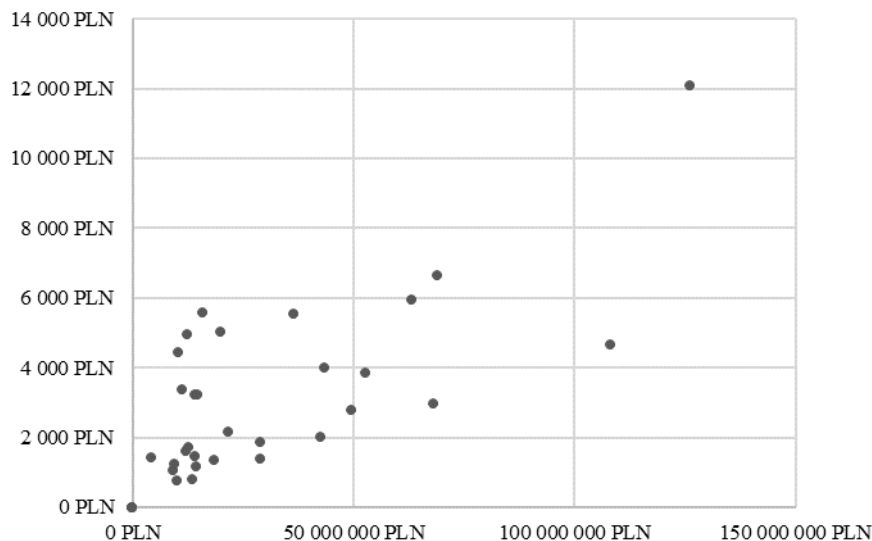
**Figure 1.** Types of revitalised areas in Cittaslow municipalities (share in the total area of all revitalised parts in %)

Source: the author, based on *Statistical data on revitalisation...* (2018)

At the end of December 2020, the Polish Cittaslow Network consisted of the following 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, Gołdap (2013), Górowo Iławeckie, Kalety, Nidzica, Nowy Dwór Gdański, Pasym, Rejowiec Fabryczny (2014), Bartoszyce, Działdowo, Lidzbark, Orneta, Prudnik (2015), Głubczyce, Jeziorany, Sępole (2016), Rzgów, Sianów (2017), Braniewo, Sierpc, Wydmyny (2019), Morąg, Olecko, and Szczytno (2020). As the survey took place in May 2020, the analysis applies to 31 cities, excluding the cities that joined to the network at the end of 2020. Because the Cittaslow network has been developing in Poland for a relatively long time, the mayors were asked to point to no more than five most important effects achieved in their cities owing to the membership in the Cittaslow network. Revitalisation and activation of degraded areas in the city was one of the most popular indications (chosen in 58% cities). The survey results verified that revitalisation measures pursued in cities are connected with the

membership of cities in the Cittaslow network. By planning revitalisation measures from a supralocal perspective, the Cittaslow cities had better chances to perform the planned projects and to develop more rapidly owing to the UE funds. Other important effects achieved in connection with the membership in the Cittaslow network, the mayors indicated: more effective promotion of the city (58%), improved aesthetic value, quality and accessibility to public space (55%), acquisition of additional sources of investment funds, e.g. from the EU funds (52%), building a positive image of a Cittaslow city, ‘a city where living is good’ (42%), developing collaboration with Cittaslow member cities (36%), more intensive cultural life and events connected with the preservation of cultural heritage (29%), and improved quality of life in a city, noticeable to city residents (26%). This distribution of replies may suggest that the aims of revitalisation and the vision of a city development arising from the adopted slow city model are compatible, and the effects of the membership in the Cittaslow network indicated by the respondents are to a great extent achievable owing to the revitalisation the cities undertake.

It should be emphasised that the elaboration of the Supralocal revitalisation program for the network of Cittaslow cities bettered the chances of the cities included in the program to acquire external sources of funds for such investments, especially in the smallest cities. One of the reasons is that an amount of 51.1 million euros was allocated to the implementation of this program in the Operational Program of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship for the years 2014-2020. When analysing the total amount of the funds allocated to revitalisation in the Cittaslow cities (not just the funds planned in the *Supralocal revitalisation program for the network of Cittaslow cities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship*, but also in revitalisation programs for individual cities), in both absolute (PLN) and relative (PLN *per capita*) figures, it is possible to observe quite a considerable variation in these values. The highest sum of the funds allocated to the projects planned in revitalisation programs during the entire time period covered by the program was in the following municipalities: Murowana Goślina, Bartoszyce, Lubawa, Szczytno, Biskupiec, Morąg, whereas the least funds were secured in Jeziorany, Orneta, Lidzbark. Estimated sums of funds to projects covered by the revitalisation program over its entire implementation time expressed per 1 resident of a city reached the highest value in Murowana Goślina, Lubawa, Sianów and Górowo Iławeckie, being the lowest in Gołdap, Braniewo, Orneta. The distribution of the Cittaslow municipalities with respect to the value of estimated funds dedicated to projects included in the revitalisation program during its implementation period as well as the value of estimated funds to projects planned in the revitalisation program during its entire duration calculated *per capita* are illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of Cittaslow municipalities in respect of estimated funds to finance projects contained in the revitalisation program throughout its duration (PLN) (horizontal axis) and estimated funds to finance projects contained in the revitalisation program throughout its duration *per capita* (PLN *per capita*) (vertical axis)

Source: the author, based on *Statistical data on revitalisation...* (2018)

Respondents to survey were also asked whether results of a city's certification and recertification (following the *Cittaslow International Charter*) were taken into consideration when developing and implementing the city's strategy. In 6 out of the 31 analysed cities (19%), the answer was 'certainly yes', and in other 17 cities (55%) the reply was 'usually yes'. Respondents from 8 cities (26%) replied that they did not usually take into account results of their city's certification when planning the city's development strategy, although none of the respondents chose the answer 'definitely not'. Nearly three quarters of the mayors invited to participate in the survey acknowledged the importance of certification in the planning of the development of slow cities. Diagnosis and reflection which accompany the process of certification or recertification can play a particularly important role in shaping a long-term development pathway for a slow city, by definition based on the city's unique internal resources, which are actually the subject of a certification assessment. The survey results implicated the need to expand the research on the use of certification tools and results of certification assessments in the planning of a slow city's revitalisation. These could be particularly helpful for determination to what extent a revitalisation program undertaken in a given city has resulted in its improved score with regard to the macro-areas that are submitted to certification. Another question it can resolve is whether revitalisation measures are compatible with the slow philosophy.

## 5. Discussion

The cities in the Polish network are diverse with respect to many aspects, such as the size of their population, population density, situation in the labour market, or level of social and economic development (Wierzbicka, 2020, pp. 217–218; Wierzbicka *et al.*, 2019, p. 121; Senetra & Szarek-Iwaniuk, 2020, p. 13). They also vary in the capacities (infrastructure, funds, and organisation) to undertake and pursue revitalisation efforts. Thus, the Cittaslow cities are also diverse in their ability to use revitalisation in the local development policy. The course of revitalisation in slow cities depends on a great variety of factors, which can be associated with individual conditions for the development of small network member cities, development of the collaboration between cities within the network, and external circumstances, such as the policy of development of cities implemented on the national and regional levels, or accessibility to external sources of financing revitalisation projects (Farelnik, 2020b, pp. 25–33; *Supralocal revitalisation program...*, 2020, pp. 43–45).

The *Supralocal revitalisation program for the network of Cittaslow cities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship* is an example of an integrated enterprise, interesting on an international scale. It is one of the few very specific, 'hard' projects undertaken in town networks. Through united action, acknowledgement of the idea and engagement of regional authorities, cities were able to gain significant funds and to perform the planned revitalisation activities on a regional scale. By means of revitalisation, each of the engaged cities made attempts to employ its unique potential for real development and improvement in the life quality of its inhabitants (Mazur-Belzyt, 2017, p. 7). Zadęcka (2018, pp. 95–96) also mentions revitalisation one of the benefits from the implementation of the 'slow city' model. The role of revitalisation planned in the supralocal context as an important domain for the collaboration of the Polish Cittaslow cities is also supported by results of other studies concerning the cooperation between Cittaslow cities carried out so far (Farelnik, 2020a, pp. 276–177).

Revitalisation can be perceived and analysed in two ways: as a tool serving to implement the slow city model and as an effect of being a member of the Cittaslow network, which has created opportunities to perform this process in the supralocal (network-related) perspective (Strzelecka, 2018, pp. 58–61). As highlighted by Skalski (2018, p. 253): 'it is no longer time to think in the scale and categories of 'my commune', excluding oneself from the territorial context, from the otherwise natural competition with neighbouring communes. Experiences teach that in the National Cittaslow Network in the Region of Warmia and Mazury, it is a 'team fight'. Mutual assistance in the implementation of a well-thought-out supralocal program – is always positive, because it works synergistically'. Thus, whenever we encounter such supralocal perception of how to plan the development of Cittaslow cities,

revitalisation should be planned with the view of ensuring benefits not just for a single city but for a group of cities and for the entire network. However, this issue needs some further, more detailed investigations.

This research has proven that Cittaslow cities take advantage of the results of certification in the policy of their local development, and the list of measured parameters as well as the scores earned by certified cities may be an indicator of how to direct future activities to develop a city and to improve its score in five years. The current results are in agreement with the opinions expressed by other authors who underline, when discussing Cittaslow certification requirements, that ‘the most significant managerial implication can be considered the importance that policy-makers recognize in defining and implementing projects and initiatives that not only allow granting and maintenance of certification, but also support the identification of areas considered most strategic for the sustainable development of the destination and at the same time avoid wasting resources in activities not considered strategic. (...) There is also the ability of policy-makers to link these specific actions to clear goals and related tools that will be used to quantify the achievement of each goal’ (Prezenza *et al.*, 2015, p. 58).

The fact that so many Cittaslow cities are turning to revitalisation proves that the city authorities are aware of it being a development tool which can have positive bearing on the development of the city they manage and which may contribute to the successful implementation of the slow city vision they pursue. The development of Cittaslow cities relies heavily on the endogenous potential of each member city, and well-planned revitalisation efforts can certainly help to preserve such endogenous assets (compare Çiçek *et al.*, 2019, pp. 402–410).

## 6. Conclusions

In respect of the purpose of this study, it has been proven that revitalisation is used as a tool in a local development policy by the vast majority of Polish slow cities, therefore suggesting that this process has (and will likely continue to have) much importance to the development of these localities. Effects of revitalisation can be observed in many areas in which a city functions, which is evidenced by the determined character and localisation of revitalisation projects implemented in Cittaslow cities. These projects most often entail revitalisation of historic city centres, preservation of cultural heritage, or the establishment of institutions dedicated to social and cultural activation of the city inhabitants. Other than effects observed immediately (revitalisation improved the aesthetic value, quality and accessibility to public space), revitalisation can also contribute to a more effective promotion of the city and building the positive image of a Cittaslow city.

A revitalisation program developed on a supralocal scale can help to achieve yet another objective, such as the enhanced collaboration between member cities. A good example is the *Supralocal revitalisation program for the network of Cittaslow cities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship*, where networked cities make a shared effort to secure sources of funding for revitalisation projects, and also to concentrate these funds in cities which have adopted a similar model of development (slow city). Thus, this innovative approach to the financing of revitalisation, where the allocation of funds invested in revitalisation concerns a network of cities and where applications for financial support are submitted by entities that belong to a larger networked structure. This testifies to the fact that competition among cities (for example, to obtain funds for revitalisation from EU sources), owing to the network collaboration, can evolve towards effective cooperation of cities. This approach deserves attention and should be the subject of broader considerations, especially in the view of the subsequent EU financial perspective. After 2020, the financing of revitalisation from the EU funds, which are after all limited, will not be so easy and therefore local authorities (and other local bodies) will have to search for other sources of funds, which will enable them to achieve this goal. An opportunity for securing an optimal funding scheme for revitalisation projects seems to lie in their financing with the help of public-private partnership. Diversification of both means and sources of funding revitalisation projects will be necessary in the future. This will also be important for building the resilience of slow cities.

Regarding cooperation, partnership but also the financial structure of such projects, it is worth underlining the role of private entities in the process of revitalisation of slow cities. It appears that striving towards a greater involvement of private entrepreneurs in running their businesses in revitalised areas, especially when their business activities are related to culture, education, local community integration, restaurants, local handicrafts, small crafts and services, should be an important objective inscribed in the local policy of development. Obviously, there is a role to be played in this context by these enterprises which have been awarded the title of ‘A Friend of Cittaslow’ and operate in the area covered by a given municipality. Hence, a possible field for future studies on the Cittaslow network cities is the development of entrepreneurship in accord with the slow city model in revitalised urban areas. Such research would supplement very well the current study, where conclusions were based solely on opinions provided by one group of revitalisation stakeholders (local authorities).

Revitalisation in the spirit of slow philosophy is a tool of social and economic activation of cities, and when properly planned can contribute to the development of a small town and to the improved quality of life in its boundaries. What matters here is to be guided by the principles of the slow city model when planning revitalisation measures, as the former has an adaptable (rather than universal) character and favours a creative and innovative view of the future of a city, ‘a city where living is good’. It would also be useful to continue the growth of the network approach already initiated by the Polish slow cities, placing more emphasis on network-related and synergistic effects attainable in future supralocal programs of revitalisation in the Cittaslow network cities. As a result, it will be possible to perfect the methodology of designing a supralocal (networked) revitalisation program, so as to make it an effective tool applied for the development of the Cittaslow network cities, providing them with an opportunity to create network tourism products and encourage social activity.

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