

Article

# Architectural and Urban Attractiveness of Small Towns: A Case Study of Polish Coastal Cittaslow Towns on the Pomeranian Way of St. James

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**Abstract:** The paper presents the results of a study on the attractiveness to tourists and natives of the cultural qualities of coastal towns on The Pomeranian Way of St. James that are members of the Cittaslow network. Attention to the quality of urban life is inscribed in the development policies of towns applying to join the Cittaslow movement. In order to join the network (apart from the size criterion), towns need to meet a minimum of 50% plus one of the 72 criteria grouped into seven categories. One of the category is Quality of Urban Life Policy, so the towns applying to join Cittaslow commit themselves to actions aimed at improving the quality of urban life. The study on the attractiveness of cultural qualities of towns to tourists and natives was conducted using the author's BRB method, whose added value is its universality and the possibility to study small towns regardless of their membership in the Cittaslow network. BRB is an acronym that stands for BUILDINGS, RELATIONSHIPS, BALANCE, and comprises three scopes of activities: BUILDINGS (iconic building and important sites where the inhabitants and the tourists are present); RELATIONSHIPS (the visual effects of the relations between the inhabitants and the town) and BALANCE (solutions that implement modern technologies). This method enables identification of places that are important to the inhabitants, where urban life takes place and which are often created with the involvement of the inhabitants. These are often the same spaces as those that attract tourists and perhaps stimulate them the desire to visit the town again (BRB—be right back). The aim of the BRB method is shown the attractiveness of small towns. The study has shown that the characteristic feature of Polish Cittaslow towns is their diversity: the architectural attractiveness of three towns is high both to tourists and natives. On the other hand, the urban attractiveness of the examined towns is an insufficient.



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**Keywords:** small towns; Cittaslow; quality of urban life; attractiveness to tourists; attractiveness to natives; the Way of St. James; small homeland; local patriotism; BRB method

## 1. Introduction

A well-kept space has measurable value. An area developing in an uncontrolled way, shaped without thought or planning, loses its value. The consequences of this loss are suffered by all stakeholders and users of the space. An ugly and poorly functioning city or town generates lower income because it not only attracts fewer tourists, but also makes its inhabitants tired and less efficient [1]. The quality of life—taking into account the ambiguous definition of this term—is measured not only by the quality of the town's or city's spatial structure (historical buildings and parks), but also by the scale of involvement of the town's or city's administrators, local leaders, and inhabitants in activities aimed at building and maintaining bonds with the town or city and the region.

The inhabitants of small towns have a valuable social capital that is virtually impossible to build in large urban centers: a deep sense of belonging to a place of residence that implies strong social ties and the ability to cooperate because “*participation and engagement are the life and promise of the city*” ([2], p.110). Such an attitude produces a synergistic effect

influencing and reinforcing the interrelationship of the inhabitants, as evidenced by the numerous grassroots initiatives to improve the quality of life of small town communities. Therefore, Jane Jacobs' statement "*cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody*" remains valid ([3], p. 286).

Small towns, however, due to limited accessibility because of both their peripheral location (and often-underdeveloped public transport network), as well as a lack of adequate tourist facilities, tend to lose, in terms of tourist attractiveness, to the big cities in their vicinity. Despite these limitations, it is the "smallness" of these towns, their human scale of development, the unique urban-architectural structure, as well as the quietness and tranquility—which are scarce commodities in our modern world—that constitute their unique value [4].

There are over 80 scientific articles and books on Cittaslow published between 2005–2021, of which over 70% are in 2015–2021, which shows the growing importance of this movement. The topics of the articles concern general considerations on the *founding idea and the certification process* [4–15]. The Cittaslow strategy is defined as an alternative model of *small towns development especially sustainable development* [16–25]. Tourism theme is also the subject of articles covering *classical tourism* [26–28] as well as *sustainable tourism* [29–33] otherwise called *slow tourism* [34–36], *slow travel* [12,35], *rural tourism* [37,38] and also *green tourism* (unlike Green Tourism, a British eco-certification program for sustainable development in the tourism industry) [39]. There are also the cases studies of such Cittaslow towns as Clonakilty in the Republic of Ireland [40]; Goolwa in Australia [30]; Midden-Delfland in the Netherlands [17]; three Turkish towns: Seferihisar [17], Vize [23], and Tarakli [19]; two British towns: Aylsham [7], and Mold [31], four German towns: Hersbruck [17,41]; Meldorf [4,42,43]; Penzlin [42], and Waldkirch [41], and finally eight Polish towns: Bisztynek [44,45]; Lidzbark Warmiński [44–46], and nine other researchers in [20]; Morağ—state before its accession to the Cittaslow network [47], Murowana Goślina [48], Nowy Dwór Gdański [42], Prudnik [49], Reszel [44,45], Ryn [44,45].

Cittaslow towns in each country was also researched: in Australia [50], in China [27] in German [51], in Great Britain [52,53], in South Korea [54], in Poland [21,39,55–57], in Poland and France together [22] and in Spain [58]. Globally and in Poland, not only is the Cittaslow network dynamically developing and growing in importance, but also small towns are becoming more important in it [4,42,43,56,57].

While research on the *socio-economic* situation of Polish Cittaslow towns is conducted [43,59–62], the *urban and architectural* approach to the quality of urban space has been discussed in the literature only to a limited extent [55,57]. Therefore the purpose of the work is study the architectural and urban attractiveness of cultural qualities of coastal towns that are members of the Cittaslow network filling the research gap.

Attractiveness to tourists is defined in classical terms as the properties of an area or locality resulting from a set of characteristics of the natural environment and the cultural (anthropogenic) environment, which stimulates interest and attract tourists [63]. Attractiveness to natives is related to local patriotism and the concept of a small homeland, and is defined as the properties of the locality and/or area resulting from the set of characteristics of the natural and cultural (anthropogenic) environment which inspire the pride of the natives in their possessions and develop the kind of attachment (mental and emotional) to the place of residence that results in actions for its benefit. Their actions are aimed at making their locality and/or area more beautiful and better.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Cittaslow—Area of Research

In 2012, the first conference of the International Association of Cittaslow was held in Brussels, with the European Parliament in participation; the conference aimed to present the Cittaslow as a movement towards improving the quality of life of the European community. During this conference, Zygmunt Bauman—sociologist, philosopher—stated that Cittaslow is one of the world's 18 forces capable of restoring the power of local communities [4].

Cittaslow currently (as of March 2021) brings together 276 towns from 30 countries. The Polish network of Cittaslow towns has 35 members and is the second in terms of size after the founding Italian network with 86 towns.

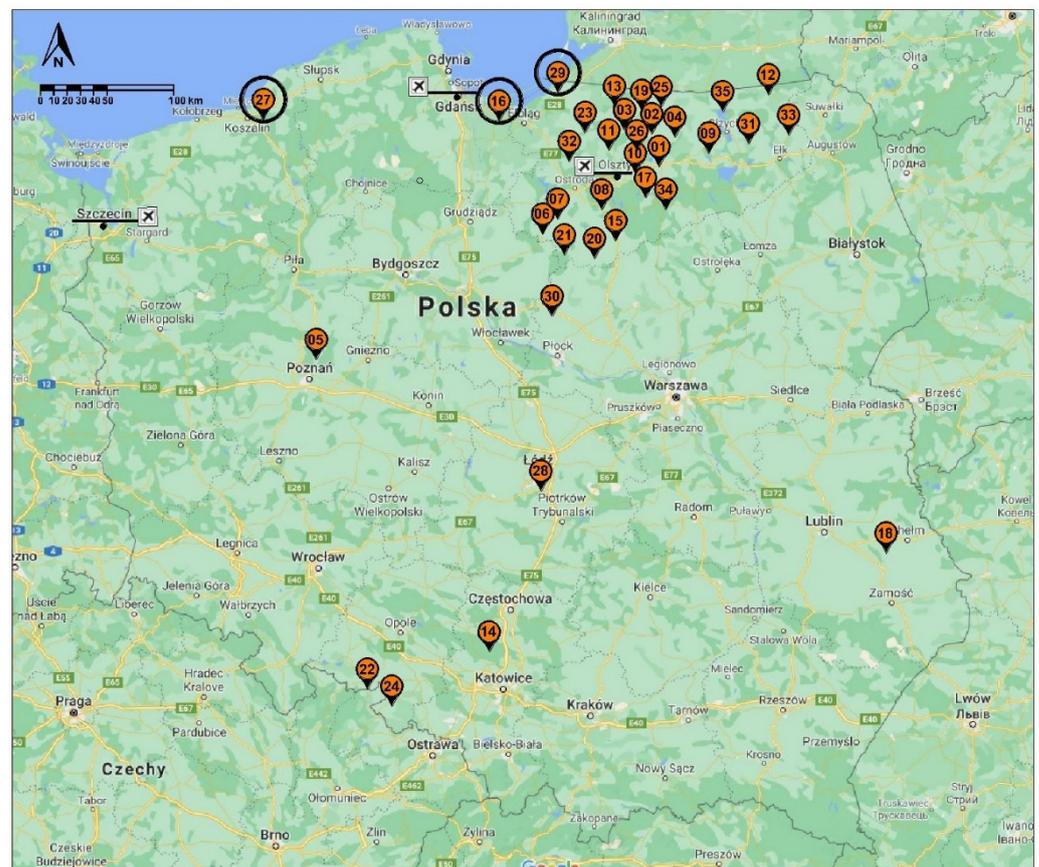
Polish Cittaslow towns differ in terms of their population, area, and location in various regions of Poland, with the largest number of Cittaslow towns, 27, located in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province, two (Głubczyce and Prudnik)—in the Opolskie Province, and one in each of the following provinces: Pomorskie (Nowy Dwór Gdański), Zachodniopomorskie (Sianów), Śląskie (Kalety), Wielkopolskie (Murowana Goślina), Lubelskie (Rejowiec Fabryczny), Łódzkie (Rzgów), and Mazowieckie (Sierpc). The unique characteristics of Polish Cittaslow towns extend beyond the meaningful semantics of the ambiguous Polish translation of the Italian-English neologism Cittaslow—because the second element, *slow*, translated into Polish as “*wolne*,” means both unhurried and free. Free from globalization, haste, noise, and pressure to achieve quantitative growth instead of sustainable development. What is also noteworthy is the intent, expressed by initiators of accession to the Cittaslow organization, to build the towns’ image by emphasizing the potential of their historical urban and architectural structures and natural qualities, as well as the endogenous resources of the towns’ social capital. The Polish network of Cittaslow is growing dynamically: new towns have joined the network almost every year since 2010 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Chronology of the accession of Polish towns to the Cittaslow network.

Accession Year	Polish Cittaslow Towns
2007	(01) Biskupiec, (02) Bisztynek, (03) Lidzbark Warmiński, (04) Reszel
2008	-
2009	-
2010	(05) Murowana Goślina, (06) Nowe Miasto Lubawskie
2011	-
2012	(07) Lubawa, (08) Olsztynek, (09) Ryn
2013	(10) Barczewo, (11) Dobrze Miasto, (12) Gołdap
2014	(13) Górowo Iławeckie, (14) Kalety, (15) Nidzica, (16) Nowy Dwór Gdański, (17) Pasym; (18) Rejowiec Fabryczny
2015	(19) Bartoszyce, (20) Działdowo, (21) Lidzbark, (22) Prudnik, (23) Orneta
2016	(24) Głubczyce, (25) Sępólno, (26) Jeziorany
2017	(27) Sianów, (28) Rzgów
2018	-
2019	(29) Braniewo, (30) Sierpc, (31) Wydminy
2020	(32) Morąg, (33) Olecko, (34) Szczytno
2021	(35) Węgorzewo

The study presented in this paper focuses on three Polish coastal Cittaslow towns: Braniewo (Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province), Nowy Dwór Gdański (Pomorskie Province), and Sianów (Zachodniopomorskie Province). Their boundaries do not reach the waters of the Baltic Sea, but their entire territories are located within 20 km from the coastline, which justifies the claim of their coastal nature (Figure 1). In addition, all three towns are located on the Pomeranian St. James (Figure 2). Braniewo (population up to 20,000) is located about 15 km from the Vistula Lagoon and, despite its distance from the Lagoon, it was once considered as a port town (in the past it had the only seaport in the Warmia region). Today, in the place of the historic port, there is a modern marina, and the St. Mary’s Granary (Table 6), which now houses a restaurant, is a reminder of the intense maritime trade. Nowy Dwór Gdański (population up to 20,000) is located approximately 17 km from the Gulf of Gdańsk in the central part of Żuławy Wiślane, a geographical region characterized by the fact that 28% of its area is located in depressions below sea level (the town’s altitude is  $-0.7$  m below the sea level). Żuławy Wiślane has very unique characteristics. The several-year-long process of its development involved people’s constant struggle against nature [64]. Sianów (population up to 20,000), like Braniewo, is located approx. 15 km from

the Baltic Sea coast. The towns in question have different access to an airport by train and road (Table 2).



**Figure 1.** Location of Polish coastal Cittaslow towns: (16) Nowy Dwór Gdański, (27) Sianów, and (29) Braniewo.



**Figure 2.** (1) Braniewo, (2) Nowy Dwór Gdański, and (3) Sianów along the Pomeranian Way of St. James.

The town with the best access to an airport is Nowy Dwór Gdański, located 40 km from Gdańsk; Braniewo is located 90 km from Olsztyn and 105 km from Gdańsk and Sianów is located 175 km from Szczecin and 185 km from Gdańsk. Of the three towns, only Braniewo has a railway station, but the travel times are difficult to determine due to the currently (2001) ongoing renovation of the Dobre Miasto–Orneta railroad section, which is a part of the Braniewo–Olsztyn route; it is assumed that train speeds will increase to 100 km/h from the previous 40–50 km/h [65].

**Table 2.** Basic information on and access by road and train to Polish coastal Cittaslow towns.

Name and Motto of the Municipality Nature of the Municipality (Cittaslow Membership)	Nearest City with an Airport	Distance from the City with an Airport (km)	Access by Road from the City with an Airport (minutes)	Access by Train from the City with an Airport (minutes)
3Braniewo The first capital of Warmia [66] urban (entire municipality)	Olsztyn Gdańsk	90 105	90 65	60 <sup>1</sup> -
Nowy Dwór A new living space [67] urban-rural (only the town)	Gdańsk Olsztyn	40 130	30 80	- -
Sianów A municipality with enthusiasm [68] urban-rural (entire municipality)	Szczecin Gdańsk	175 185	165 165	- -

<sup>1</sup> The approximately planned time.

## 2.2. BRB Method

BRB method is an author's method for studying the attractiveness of small towns to tourists and natives. BRB is an acronym that stands for BUILDINGS, RELATIONSHIPS, BALANCE, and comprises three scopes of activities.

**BUILDINGS**—an activity consisting in identifying in the town's space (and assigning a score to according to Table 1) the iconic building structures (i.e., buildings, edifices, and townscape structures) and sites (town squares, main streets used as marketplaces if there are none; boulevards, promenades, arboretums, botanical gardens, etc.) that are the material cultural heritage, the place where the inhabitants and the tourists are present, and the place where social bonds of the inhabitants are established and strengthened.

Iconic buildings include seaports, marinas and harbors (for yachts or kayaks), bus stations (or bus stops, if there is no station building), railway stations, places of worship (churches and chapels), municipal offices, tourist information points, museums, libraries, other important buildings, townscape structures and street furniture, as well as service buildings of supra-local importance (district governor's office buildings). Important sites include town squares (main and others), green areas with the characteristics of parks (boulevards, promenades, arboretums, botanical gardens, parks, plazas), and allotment gardens (Table 3).

**Table 3.** The list of iconic building structures and sites with their assigned scores and identification of the nature of the attraction.

Building Structure's or Site's Name	Attractiveness to Tourists	Attractiveness to Natives
Building structures		
[1.1] Seaports—7 points	✓	
[1.2] Yacht marinas—5 points	✓	
[1.3] Kayak harbors—3 points	✓	
[2.1] Bus stations, bus stops if there are no stations—1 point	✓	✓
[2.2] Railway stations—3 points	✓	✓
[3] Places of worship		
- Shrine—5 points	✓	✓
- Parish church, auxiliary church, cemetery chapel—1 point		
[4] Municipal offices—1 point		✓
[5] Tourist information points Separate building—2 points In another building—1 point	✓	
[6] Museums—3 points	✓	

Table 3. Cont.

Building Structure's or Site's Name	Attractiveness to Tourists	Attractiveness to Natives
Building structures		
[7] Libraries		
- Town libraries—3 points	✓	✓
- Other—1 point		
[8] Other important buildings—1 point		
	✓	✓
[9.1] Townscape structures and street furniture—1 point		
	✓	✓
[10] Service buildings of supra-local importance (district governor's office)—1 point		
		✓
sites		
[M] Town market square <sup>1</sup>		
- Main—10 points	✓	✓
- Other—5 points		
[S] Main street <sup>2</sup> serving as a marketplace in its absence—5 points		
	✓	✓
[P] Park <sup>3</sup>		
- Boulevards, promenades, amphitheatres—5 points	✓	✓
- Arboretums, botanical gardens—3 points		
- Parks, plazas—1 point		
[G] Allotment garden <sup>4</sup> —1 point		
		✓

<sup>1</sup> In Italian: mercato, in German: Marktplatz. <sup>2</sup> in Italian: strada, in German: Straße. <sup>3</sup> in Italian: parco, in German: Park. <sup>4</sup> in Italian: giardino di riparto, in German: Kleingärten.

Each building structure and site is assigned a score divided into three categories:

- Category I (C I)—1 to 10 points, depending on the importance of the building structure or site (Table 3);
- Category II (C II)—additional 2 points for building structures or sites that are attractive to both tourists and town inhabitants;
- Category III (C III)—additional 3 points for building structures or sites that have been entered in the register of monuments or has qualified for such an entry.

**RELATIONSHIPS**—an activity consisting in identifying (and assigning a score to) the visual effects of the relations between the inhabitants and the town, especially it means the effects of activities resulting from grassroots initiatives (all forms of self-organization of residents, collective action aimed at a specific goal and to cause changes in the local environment, action for the common good).

Polish Cittaslow towns, in addition to their cultural and natural heritage, have other important endogenous assets: a commonly underestimated social bond and awareness, and the ability to cooperate, which results from a deep sense of belonging to the place of residence. This attitude gives them more vitality and efficiency in accomplishing their objectives than can be seen in large cities. Small towns have a feedback loop: the public identifies with the towns' vision and strategy of development, which contributes to building an even stronger local identity, which in turn has a positive influence on the development of social capital for local development [21].

The form of building relations with the town that has an effect in specific projects is a Civic Budget: a separate part of the town's budget, the allocation of which is decided by the inhabitants who submit their own ideas.

The following scores are assigned to individual initiatives aimed to build relationships between inhabitants and their towns:

- for the Civic Budget—2 points for each year in which it is implemented;
- for the initiatives started—2 points;
- for other regular initiatives—2 points for each year in which the initiative is implemented;
- for activities initiated because of Covid-19 allowing library use or maintaining community relationships—1 point.

**BALANCE**—an activity consisting in noticing (and assigning a score to) solutions that implement modern technologies in a way that does not disturb the historical spatial structure of the town, the local traditions, and the natural environment; solutions that implementing modern technologies in a way that emphasizes the cultural and natural qualities of the town.

The aspiration of Cittaslow members is by no means to create urban open-air museums, but to skillfully use contemporary technologies in a way that does not interfere with the historical spatial structure and the local tradition [43]; e.g., in Orvieto, there are noiseless electric buses driving along the medieval streets [69]. In addition, town authorities support initiatives aimed to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants and the aesthetics of urban space that preserve local traditions, e.g., in Bra, the Town Hall provides grants for renovation of buildings using red tiles and honey-colored plaster, which are characteristic of the region [69].

Each solution that implements modern technologies in a manner that emphasizes the cultural qualities of the town was awarded 5 points.

In summary, stage BUILDINGS consists of seven steps and stages RELATIONSHIPS and BALANCE consist of three stages (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Steps of the BRB method.

<b>BUILDINGS</b>	Step 1	identifying the iconic building structures and sites detailed in Table 3
	Step 2	assigning a score in Category I detailed in Table 3
	Step 3	Check if building structures or sites are attractive to both tourists and town inhabitants according to Table 3
	Step 4	assigning a score in Category II: additional 2 points for building structures or sites that are attractive to both tourists and town inhabitants
	Step 5	check if building structures or sites have been entered in the register of monuments or has qualified for such an entry
	Step 6	assigning a score in Category III: additional 3 points for building structures or sites that have been entered in the register of monuments or has qualified for such an entry
	Step 7	scoring points
<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b>	Step 1	identifying the visual effects of the relations between the inhabitants and the town
	Step 2	assigning a score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 points for each year in which the Civic Budget is implemented;</li> <li>- 2 points; for the initiatives started</li> <li>- 2 points for each year in which the regular initiative is implemented;</li> <li>- 1 point for activities initiated because of Covid-19 allowing library use or maintaining community relationships</li> </ul>
	Step 3	scoring points
<b>BALANCE</b>	Step 1	identifying the solutions that implement modern technologies in a manner that emphasizes the cultural qualities of the town
	Step 2	assigning a score: 5 points for each solution that implements modern technologies in a manner that emphasizes the cultural qualities of the town.
	Step 3	scoring points

The BRB method enables identification of places that are important to the inhabitants (public spaces where urban life takes place, often created with the inhabitants' involvement) which also delighted tourists and perhaps aroused in them the desire to "be right back" (BRB).

### 2.3. BRB Method Versus Criteria of Quality of Urban Life Policy

The conditions of membership in Cittaslow are not exorbitant and the maximum number of inhabitants of the member towns is, as a rule, 50,000. In order to join the network (apart from the size criterion), towns need to meet a minimum 50% plus one of the 72 criteria grouped into seven categories, fulfilling at least one criterion in each category. The detailed rules of membership are defined by the Cittaslow International Charter [70]. These categories are as follows: (1) Energy and Environmental Policy; (2) Infrastructure Policy; (3) Quality of Urban Life Policy; (4) Agricultural, Touristic and Artisan Policy; (5) Hospitality, Awareness and Education Policy; (6) Social integration policy; and (7) Partnership Policy. The third category, Quality of Urban Life Policy, comprises the following 17 criteria, 8 of which are obligatory. The vast majority of criteria in this category are related to the elements of the BRB method (Table 5).

**Table 5.** The relationships between criteria Quality of Urban Life Policy and BRB method.

Criteria of the Category Quality of Urban Life Policy	BRB Method
[1] Urban resilience planning	Balance
[2] Actions for the restoration and valorization of the center for urban life (street furniture, tourist signs, aerials, landscape mitigation, preservation of urban landscape)—obligatory	Buildings
[3] Recovery/creation of social green areas with productive plants and/or fruit trees	Buildings Relationship
[4] Quality of urban life (timetable house-work, company's nurseries, etc.)	Relationship Balance
[5] Transformation and reuse of peripheral areas—obligatory	-
[6] Use of "ICT" in the development of interactive services for citizens and tourists—obligatory;	Balance
[7] Service desk for sustainable architecture (bioarchitecture, etc.)—obligatory	Balance
[8] Cable network city (fiber optics, wireless systems)—obligatory	Balance
[9] Monitoring and reduction of pollutants (noise, electromagnetic fields, etc.)—obligatory	Balance
[10] Development of telecommuting	Balance
[11] Promotion of private sustainable urban planning (passive house, building materials, etc.)	Balance
[12] Promotion of social infrastructure (time banks, free cycling projects, etc.)	Balance
[13] Promotion of public sustainable urban planning (passive house, building materials, etc.)	Balance
[14] Recovery/creation of productive green areas with productive plants and/or of fruit within the urban perimeter	Relationship
[15] Determination of zones for the sale of local products—obligatory	Buildings
[16] Protection/promotion of extraordinary shops—creation of natural shopping centers—obligatory	Buildings
[17] Cubic meters of cement (net in infrastructure)/green urban area	-

Towns applying to join Cittaslow commit themselves to actions aimed at improving the quality of urban life. These actions are verified during periodical audits of their

fulfillment of the criteria. Filling in a table with numerous criteria during certification is a tedious process but it allows one to realize the fact of ownership of both material values and an endogenous social capital [4,43]. Moreover, creation of a list of criteria for accession to Cittaslow is accompanied by reflection not only on the current situation of the town but also on the directions of its development [22].

### 3. Results—The Attractiveness of Three Coastal Cittaslow Towns

#### 3.1. Buildings

Polish Cittaslow towns differ also in their nature and number of buildings considered as a tourist attraction. The situation is similar in the case of the three studied Cittaslow towns which, despite their coastal location, are very diverse in terms of the number of buildings and sites that are attractive to tourists and locals, as well as their nature or status in terms of entry in the register of historic monuments. Due to the large number of historic buildings, Braniewo was ranked first and received 143 points (Table 6), Nowy Dwór Gdański was ranked second with 110 points (Table 7), and Sianów was ranked third and received 87 points (Table 8).



**Figure 3.** Amphitheater in Braniewo, Poland (Photo by Alicja K. Zawadzka, 27 June 2021).

**Table 6.** The list of iconic building structures and sites with their assigned scores in Braniewo.

Building Structure's or Site's Name	Cat. I	Cat. II	Cat. III
<b>Building Structures</b>			
[1.1] Sea ports	none	none	none
[1.2] Yacht marina on the Pasłęka River, Portowa Street	5	-	-
[1.3] Kayak harbors	none	none	none
[2.1] Bus station	1	2	-
[2.2] Railway stations, Dworcowa Street	2	2	3 1
[3.1] Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at the parish of St. Catherine, 2 Katedralna Street	5	2	3 2
[3.2] Sanctuary of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, 10 Świątokrzyska Street	5	2	3 3
[3.3] Church of St. Anthony, 1 Konarskiego Street	1	2	3 4
[3.4] Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, 11 Kościuszki Street	1	2	3 5
[3.5] Church of St Adalbert. A military-civilian parish, 27 Sucharskiego Street	1	-	-
[3.6] Religious Congregation of the Sisters of St. Catherine, 7 Moniuszki Street	1	2	3 6
[4] Braniewo City Hall, 111 Kościuszki Street	1	2	3 7
[5] Tourist information point, 7 Katedralna Street	2	-	-
[6] Museum of the Braniewo Region, Collegium Hosianum, 17/19 Gdańska Street	3	-	3 8
[7.1] Town Public Library, 7 Katedralna Street	3	-	-
[7.2] Library of the Club of the 9th Braniewo Armored Cavalry Brigade, 41 Sikorskiego Street	1	-	-
[7.3] Garrison Club Library, 3 Sikorskiego Street	1	-	-
[8.1] Braniewo Culture Center, including Baszta Cinema, 9 Katedralna Street	1	-	-
[8.2] Bishop's Castle Gate Tower	1	-	3 9
[8.3] Braniewo Tower	1	-	3 10
[8.4] St. Mary's Granary, 6 Portowa Street	1	-	3 11
[8.5] Healthy Recreation and Rehabilitation Complex, Swimming Pool, 11 Łąkowa Street	1	2	-
[8.6] "Zatoka" Municipal Sports Center, 1 Łąkowa Street	1	-	-
[9.1] Wooden footbridge at the port site	1	2	-
[9.2] Fountain	1	2	-
[9.3] Statue of Blessed Regina Protmann	1	2	-
[9.4] Monument—a T-34/85 tank	1	2	-
[10] District governor's office, 2 Piłsudskiego Square	1	-	-
<b>Sites</b>			
[M] Town Square	none	none	none
[S] Main Street	none	none	none
[P1] Urban layout of the Old Town with defensive walls	1	2	3 12
[P2] Zoological and Botanical Garden in Braniewo	3	2	-
[P3] Sybiraków Plaza	1	2	-
[P4] Plaza	1	2	-
[P5] Bay Park. Municipal Sports Center	1	2	-
[P6] Park at the Grunwaldzki Square	1	2	-
[P7] The plaza in front of the Sanctuary	1	2	-
[P8] Plaza	1	2	-
[P9] Amphitheater (Figure 3)	5	2	-
[G1] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G2] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G3] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G4] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
Total	63	44	36

<sup>1</sup> Monument No. 408/94 From 21.12.1994. <sup>2</sup> Monument No. B/39 from 14.12.1957. <sup>3</sup> Monument No. B/40 (544/97) from 14.12.1957. <sup>4</sup> Monument No. A-432 from 14.12.1957. <sup>5</sup> Monument No. A-427 from 14.12.1957. <sup>6</sup> Monument No. 108/88 from 26.08.1988. <sup>7</sup> Monument No. 401/94 from 21.11.1994. <sup>8</sup> Monument No. 46/B/543/97 from 14.12.1957. <sup>9</sup> Monument No. 538/97 (B/45) from 14.12.1957. <sup>10</sup> Monument No. B/49 (537/97) from 14.12.1957. <sup>11</sup> Monument No. 127/89 from 5.07.1989. <sup>12</sup> Monument No. 237/B535/97 form 14.12.1957.

**Table 7.** The list of iconic building structures and sites with their assigned scores in Nowy Dwór Gdański.

Building Structure's or Site's Name	Cat. I	Cat. II	Cat. III
<b>Building Structures</b>			
[1.1] Sea ports	none	none	none
[1.2] Yacht marinas	none	none	none
[1.3] Kayak harbor on the Tuga River, Wejhera Street	3	-	-
[2.1] Bus station	1	2	-
[2.2] Railway stations	none	none	none
[3.1] Church of the Transfiguration of Jesus, 3 Drzymały Street	1	2	3 1
[3.2] Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 22 Obrońców Westerplatte Street	1	-	-
[4] Municipal Office in Nowy Dwór Gdański, 3 Wejhera Street	1	-	-
[5] Tourist information point at Chopina Square, Wejhera Street	2	-	-
[6] Żuławy Historical Park, 17 Kopernika Street	3	2	3 2
[7.1] Public Library of the Town and Municipality of Nowy Dwór Gd., 23 Sikorskiego Street	3	-	3 3
[8.1] Żuławy Culture Center, including Żuławy Cinema, 21 Sikorskiego Street	1	-	3 4
[8.2] Granary on the Tuga River, a complex of buildings of the former Stobbe brewery factory, 2 3 Maja street	1	-	3 5
[8.3] Station of the Żuławy Commuter Railway, 29 Dworcowa Street	1	2	3 6
[9.1] Wooden footbridge over the Tuga River	1	2	-
[9.2] Stage (Figure 4)	1	2	-
[9.3] Cross	1	2	-
[9.4] Fountain	1	2	-
[9.5] Fountain	1	2	-
[9.6] Fountain	1	2	-
[9.7] Water tower, 5 Tuwima Street	1	-	3 7
[9.8] Drawbridge of 1936, Sikorskiego Street	1	2	3 8
[10] District governor's office, 2 Piłsudskiego Square	1	-	3 9
<b>Sites</b>			
[M] Town Square	none	none	none
[S] Sikorskiego Street 19th century buildings with sides facing the street	5	2	3 10
[P1] Boulevard on the Tuga River	5	2	-
[P2] Frederic Chopin Plaza	1	2	-
[P3] Plaza	1	2	-
[P4] Plaza	1	2	-
[P5] Plaza	1	2	-
[P6] Plaza	1	2	-
[G1] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G2] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
Total	44	36	30

<sup>1</sup> Monument No. 311 from 13.10.1993. <sup>2</sup> Monument No. 1499 from 21.12.1994. <sup>3</sup> Monument No. 1686 from 23.12.1998. <sup>4</sup> Monument No. 1687 from 23.12.1998. <sup>5</sup> Monument No. 1471 from 1.08.1994. <sup>6</sup> Building qualified for entry in the register of historic monuments. <sup>7</sup> Monument No. 1371 from 26.10.1992. <sup>8</sup> Monument No. 1534 from 7.04.1995. <sup>9</sup> Monument No. 1686 from 23.12.1998.

**Table 8.** The list of iconic building structures and sites with their assigned scores in Sianów.

Building Structure's or Site's Name	Cat. I	Cat. II	Cat. III
<b>Building Structures</b>			
[1.1] Sea ports	none	none	none
[1.2] Yacht marinas	none	none	none
[1.3] Kayak harbors	none	none	none
[2.1a] Bus stop, PKS Koszalin-Gdańsk, Łużycka Street[2.1b] Bus stop, PKS Koszalin-Gdańsk, Tylna Street	1	2	-
[2.2] Railway stations	none	none	none
[3.1] Church of St. Stanisław Kostka in Sianów, 1 Kościelna Street	1	2	3 <sup>1</sup>
[3.2] Auxiliary Church of Our Lady of Fatima, 48 Dębowa Street	1	-	-
[3.3] Cemetery chapel of 1844, Węgorzewska Street	1	2	3 <sup>2</sup>
[3.4] Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Sieciemini	1	2	3 <sup>3</sup>
[3.5] Church of Our Lady of the Scapular in Szczegłino	1	2	3 <sup>4</sup>
[3.6] Church of St. Anthony of Padua in Osieki	1	2	3 <sup>5</sup>
[4] Municipal Office in Sianów from 1879 (Figure 5), 30 Armii Polskiej Street	1	2	3 <sup>6</sup>
[5] Tourist information point located in the building of the Municipal Office	1	-	-
[6] Museums	none	none	none
[7.1.] Public Library in Sianów, 9 Pod Lipami Square Street	3	-	-
[7.2] Library branch in Karniszewice	1	-	-
[7.3] Library branch in Osieki	1	-	-
[7.4] Library branch in Sierakowo	1	-	-
[7.5] Library branch in Skibno	1	-	-
[7.6] Library branch in Węgorzewo	1	-	-
[7.7] Library branch in Wierciszewo	1	-	-
[7.8] Library branch in Sicimin	1	-	-
[8.1] Culture Center and Public Library of the Municipality and Town of Sianów, including Zorza Cinema, 9 Plac pod lipami Street	1	-	-
[8.2] Sianów Town Stadium	1	-	-
[9.1] "The Little Match Girls" statue	1	2	-
[9.2] Monument to those Fallen for their Homeland	1	2	-
[9.3] Statue—bust of John Paul II	1	2	-
[10] Service buildings of supra-local importance	none	none	none
<b>Sites</b>			
[M] Town Square	none	none	none
[S] Armii Polskiej Street	5	2	3 <sup>7</sup>
[P1] Warsaw Insurgents' town park with access alleys	1	2	3 <sup>8</sup>
[P2] Arboretum in Karnieszewice	3	2	-
[G1] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G1] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G1] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
[G2] Allotment gardens	1	-	-
Total	37	26	24

<sup>1</sup> Monument No. 76 from 23.05.1955. <sup>2</sup> Chapel qualified for entry in the register of monuments. <sup>3</sup> Monument No. A-221 from 27.07.2005. <sup>4</sup> Monument No. 1186 from 25.09.1984. <sup>5</sup> Monument No. 140 from 26.04.1957. <sup>6</sup> Building qualified for entry in the register of historic monuments. <sup>7</sup> Monument No. 557 from 14.02.1966. <sup>8</sup> Alleys dating back to the early 19th century.



**Figure 4.** Stage in Nowy Dwór Gdański, Poland (Photo by Alicja K. Zawadzka, 11 June 2016).

### 3.2. Relationships

The form of building relations with the town that has an effect in specific projects is a Civic Budget: in Braniewo, it has been organized annually since 2016: in 2015, the Town Council adopted Resolution no. XIV/67/15 of 2 September 2015 on the adoption of the Rules of the Civic Budget of the Town of Braniewo [71]. In Sianów, it has been in place since 2020: in 2019, the Town Council adopted Resolution no. I/118/2019 of 26 November 2019 on the principles and procedure for carrying out consultations with residents of the Municipality and Town of Sianów on the Civic Budget of the Municipality of Sianów and the requirements to be met by the Civic Budget draft [72]. On 19 March 2021, the Żuławy Historical Park hosted the 2nd Session of the Youth Town Council in Nowy Dwór Gdański, during which the mayor of the town told about the intention to introduce a Civic Budget, adding that he counted on the help of youth councilors in this regard [73].

On 12 April 2021, the news section of Braniewo's website provided information about the Green Bench 2021 project. The information was, among other things, that for 7 years the project has been helping residents of open housing estates to transform their backyards into a place for meetings and recreation, and that the open space available to everyone enables them to make new friends and strengthen their existing friendships. On the other hand, it helps the residents relax and calm down. Within urban residential districts, more and more neighborhood groups are forming to carry out activities for the neighborhood in which they live. The Green Bench project stimulates collaboration among neighbors and encourages the existing group to be even more active. The criterion for entry into the contest is the formation of a neighborhood group of at least five people. The group prepares a design for the area in question and then holds meetings and talks with the residents of the neighborhood. After the consultation, it can submit a proposal outlining its ideas. The designs of the teams that get the highest scores from the judges receive

a cash and in-kind grant from the Bank Ochrony Środowiska Foundation of up to PLN 1950. The grant consists of funding for the purchase of plants and landscaping elements, and an in-kind award in the form of a park bench. Additionally, in this year's edition, the groups can receive funding to purchase items necessary to create micro water storage facilities. The next step is to implement the new design of the neighborhood. Throughout the duration of the project, the participants can benefit from the assistance of an expert from the Department of Landscape Architecture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. The participants and the organizer communicate online. The project carried out under the honorary patronage of the Ministry of Climate and Environment [74].



Figure 5. Municipal Office in Sianów, Poland (Photo by Alicja K. Zawadzka, 25 April 2019).

The annual (spring or autumn) cleaning of the Tuga River in Nowy Dwór Gdański has been organized by the Nowy Dwór Club since 2009 as part of the “Like the River” project co-financed by the Nowy Dwór Gdański Municipality. In 2019, the route of the event ran from the drawbridge on both banks of the river. Support was provided by the State Fire Brigade and the Volunteer Fire Brigade from Nowy Dwór Gdański, commanding volunteers on boats. The organizers provided the participants with bags and gloves. As in the previous years, after the cleaning of the river banks, the organizers invited the participants for a meal at the Żuławy Historical Park [75].

Due to the sanitary restrictions related to Covid-19, the Braniewo library launched contactless book lending from 17 March 2021 until further notice. Orders for books can be placed through the online catalogue ([szukamksiazki.pl](http://szukamksiazki.pl)), by phone, or by e-mail, with an appointment to pick up the book set at a specific time [76]. Similarly, at the Nowy Dwór Gdański library, the rules were changed on 13 March 2021. Book borrowing is done outside the building only. An appointment to order books can be made for a specific day and time by phone or email. A librarian hands the selected publications to the library user outside the library doors. In addition, there is the option of home book delivery to elderly persons and those who have difficulty leaving their homes [77]. The Sianów library and all its branches are open Tuesday through Friday from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM and on Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The library’s staff can be contacted by phone and email. The fact that the book lending rules were not changed during the Covid-19 pandemic is probably due to the existence of as many as seven branches which evenly distributed throughout the municipality [78]. Furthermore, in Nowy Dwór Gdański, on 22 February 2021, the Żuławy Historical Cafe reopened in a changed formula: meetings will be held at 6.00 PM on the FB channel of Żuławy Historical Park [79]. Braniewo received 15 points, Nowy Dwór Gdański—24 points, and Sianów—5 points (Table 9).

**Table 9.** A list of initiatives serving to build the relationships between residents and their towns, with the score assigned.

Initiative	Braniewo	Points	Nowy Dwór Gd.	Points	Sianów	Points
Civic Budget	CB 2016–2019	8	-	-	-	-
	CB 2020	2	-	-	CB 2020	2
	CB 2021	2	-	-	CB 2021	2
Other	Green Bench 2021	2	Annual Tuga cleanup from 2009 to 2019	22	-	-
associated with Covid-19	In the library: books ordered by phone, contactless book lending	1	In the library: lending books only outside the building; home book delivery for seniors	1	The library and its seven branches are open without changes	1
	-	-	Żuławy Historical Cafe in a new formula: on the FB channel of the Żuławy Historical Park	1	-	-
	Total	15	total	24	total	5

<sup>1</sup> Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 and 2021 Tuga cleanup did not take place.

### 3.3. Balance

Braniewo is traversed by the Eastern Green Velo Bicycle Route—the most spectacular cycling project ever completed in Poland [80]. The route is more than 2000 km of a specially marked out route (main route: 1887.5 km, connecting and side routes: a total of 192 km), which has been prepared from start to finish to give bikers the joy of travelling and exploring. The Eastern Green Velo Bicycle Route is the longest, consistently marked bicycle route in Poland. It runs mainly on asphalt public roads with low-intensity vehicle traffic, through five provinces located in the eastern part of the country: Warmińsko-Mazurskie (397 km), Podlaskie (598 km), Lubelskie (414 km), Podkarpackie (459 km), and Świętokrzyskie (210 km). On the distance of almost 580 km (29% of the total length), the

route runs through forest areas and on 180 km (9% of the total length)—in river valleys. The Green Velo Route mobile application contains essential information, route maps, and facilities useful during biking trips. This is a comprehensive guide not only to the Green Velo Route, but also to the side routes linked to the main route. The application enables selection of the region, the route length, the difficulty level, the matching options, e.g., for cycling enthusiasts, families with children, and history or nature enthusiasts. The application also allows the users to navigate the route: voice prompts enable the user to move freely along the route without having to constantly check the screen of the smartphone. Those who prefer to plan their trips on the website also have this option: the application is integrated into the <http://greenvelo.pl> website (accessed on 14 March 2021), so that data saved on the computer can be easily transferred to the phone. The application is available for Android, IOS, and Windows Phone systems. It was nominated for the 2017 Mobile Trends Awards. Moreover, the [polskanarowerze.pl](http://polskanarowerze.pl) website has downloadable gpx files with biking routes of the Eastern Green Velo Bicycle Route.

In the vicinity of Nowy Dwór Gdański, there is a railway station of the Żuławy Commuter Railway (ŻCR)—a narrow-gauge railway. It is a convenient way to travel to the seaside and an opportunity to get to know the landscape of Żuławy and the Vistula Spit. The first stop on the train route is Żelichowo with its historic arcaded house called Little Dutchman (moved from Jelonki, Rychliki commune, Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province; now an inn with regional cuisine; there are also workshops on cheesemaking and ceramic tile making), the cemetery of 11 villages, and the Greek Catholic parish of St. Nicholas. The next ŻCR stops, in the Stegna commune, are Tujsk (with a former Mennonite church) and Rybina (with a swing bridge on the Szkarpawa River). The ŻCR trains running on the Nowy Dwór Gdański—Stegna route and the route connecting Sztutowo (with the Stutthof Museum located at the site of the former concentration camp of the same name), Stegna, Jantar, Mikoszewo, and the right bank of the Vistula River (with the possibility of reaching the mouth of the river) have a characteristic red open car called “summer car,” serving as a special railway buffet. The car runs in all passenger trains on the above-mentioned routes. The buffet is a response to travelers’ suggestions; it has stylish benches with tables, which makes travelling by train and using the buffet at the same time easy and pleasant (payment by card is possible). ŻCR’s scheduled trains run daily during the school summer vacation and on selected days throughout the year. Traditionally, the operation of the trains starts in May. There is a modern solution available in cars made in the 1970s. The rolling stock of the Żuławy Commuter Railway comprises three Lxd2-series locomotives from the 1970s (no. 315, 294, and 325), an MBxd2-212 powered car from 1986, overhauled in 2004 (purchased with funds from the Polish Association of Railroad Enthusiasts), a second car, no. 304, owned by the city of Nowy Dwór Gdański and awaiting repair, five covered passenger cars of the Bxhpi type with 45 seats (including four operable), and five open passenger coaches called “summer cars” with 27 seats. There are also several freight cars, a Wmd004 motorized draisine, and a handcar [81]. Due to the nature of this transport service, tickets cannot be booked in advance. They can only be purchased on board the train (in cash or by credit card), with a smartphone via the MOBILET and E-PODRÓŻNIK applications, or online at [81].

In Nowy Dwór Gdański, in the vicinity of the Tourist Information Point, free wireless Internet (hotspot\_ug network) is available. On the website [82], one can download a guide with QR codes to the most important monuments of the municipality: within the town (Church of the Transfiguration of Jesus, Żuławy Historical Park, Żuławy Cultural Center) and in the municipality: Żelichowo (Orthodox Christian Church, St. Nicholas Greek Catholic parish), Kmiecín (Church of St. Hedvig) and Marynowy (Church of St. Anna, two arcaded houses).

People coming to Sianów with the intention to visit the town and the municipality can use a free tourist application for smartphones for both Android and IOS. The application works based on GPS navigation, also in the offline mode. It contains easy to understand descriptions of tourist hotspots and routes. Users can also take advantage the so-called

planner and create their own route with places to visit. The application includes a QR code scanner. The application can be downloaded from the website of the Municipal Office at the website [83] or directly from a link in Google play and Apple itunes stores.

The Sianów Public Library is an excellent example of an activity that strikes the right balance between tradition and modernity. The dynamic shape of the building leaves no doubt that it is a contemporary building, with simultaneous historical references: the dominant elements of its facade are one-and-a-half story high glass panels and red brick and the height of the building and the ridge arrangement of the gable roof are a continuation of the form of the neighboring building. In addition, for many years the Sianów library has occupied the highest places in the Ranking of Libraries organized by the Book Institute and the “Rzeczpospolita” daily newspaper. In 2020, it took the 1st place in Poland in the best library category and the 1st place as the best library in the Zachodniopomorskie Province; in previous years, it ranked just as high [84] (Table 10).

**Table 10.** Sianów library’s places in the 2014–2020 Ranking of Libraries.

Year	Place in Poland in the Best Library Category	Place in the Zachodniopomorskie Province in the Best Library Category
2014	8th	1st
2015	16th	2nd
2016	10th	2nd
2017	2th	1st
2018	1st	1st
2019	2nd	1st
2020	1st	1st

All three surveyed towns—Braniewo, Nowy Dwór Gdański, and Sianów—are traversed by the Pomeranian Way of St. James (Figure 2). It is the oldest (existing for more than 1200 years) and largest (covering almost the entire Europe in more than 20 countries) network of routes (with the length of more than 25,000 km) leading from different parts of Europe to Santiago de Compostela in Spain [85,86]. The first records from the area of today’s Poland date back to the 11th century. The Pomeranian Way of St. James (one of the seventeen routes in Poland) is the route that once began in Königsberg and today starts in the eastern part of Lithuania (Kretinga) and leads through Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast), Poland, and Germany to the main routes leading to Spain. The present shape of the Pomeranian Way of St. James is the result of the Revitalization of the European Cultural Route in the South Baltic Area (RECRete) project. The Pomeranian Way of St. James has existed for centuries in the South Baltic area and extended from Königsberg through Gdańsk and Szczecin, to Rostock and further west. The aim of the project is to restore this particular route and link the existing heritage to the wider European network. The project began in January 2011 and was completed in December 2014. Its total cost was equal to 1.4 million euros, 85 percent of which came from the Interreg South Baltic Programme. The beneficiary of the project was the municipality of Lębork [87]. The effects of the project include:

- over 1000 km of marked route;
- 10 information boards in the Pomorskie Province;
- two pilgrim houses;
- a map and a guide to the Pomeranian Way of St. James in four languages;
- a pilgrim’s passport;
- a promotional film and its broadcast on the Polish national television;
- organization of pilgrimages; and
- the Good Practice Guide for the Pomeranian Way of St. James, an e-book in the .pdf format.

Every year in which the feast of St. James the Apostle (25 July) falls on a Sunday is celebrated in Santiago de Compostela as a Holy Year. This is the case this year (2021) the third holy year in the third millennium of Christianity. It is a special time for the entire Pomeranian Way of St. James in Europe, also in Poland. The Polish, Pomeranian section of the Way—the Pomeranian Way of St. James—is 1133.6 km long and leads from Braniewo to Szczecin and through Świnoujście further to Rostock in Germany. The Pomeranian Way of St. James is divided into seven parts with 29 sections. Pilgrims following the route can admire the beautiful landscape of the Baltic coast and visit valuable cultural monuments using modern solutions: since 2015, one can download a smartphone application for both Android and IOS. The application works without internet access and the description of the individual sections includes maps so that tourists can use the guide even without geolocation on their phones and without mobile network transmission. The application contains practical information about the route (e.g., addresses of tourist information points, accommodation, and catering facilities). It has all the information contained in the paper guide. Two applications are available for the Android system: one for the entire Pomeranian Way of St. James and one only for the sections located in the Zachodniopomorskie Province. The application for the IOS is visually and functionally a more-or-less exact copy of the application for Android and includes only the sections from Słupsk to Sławno.

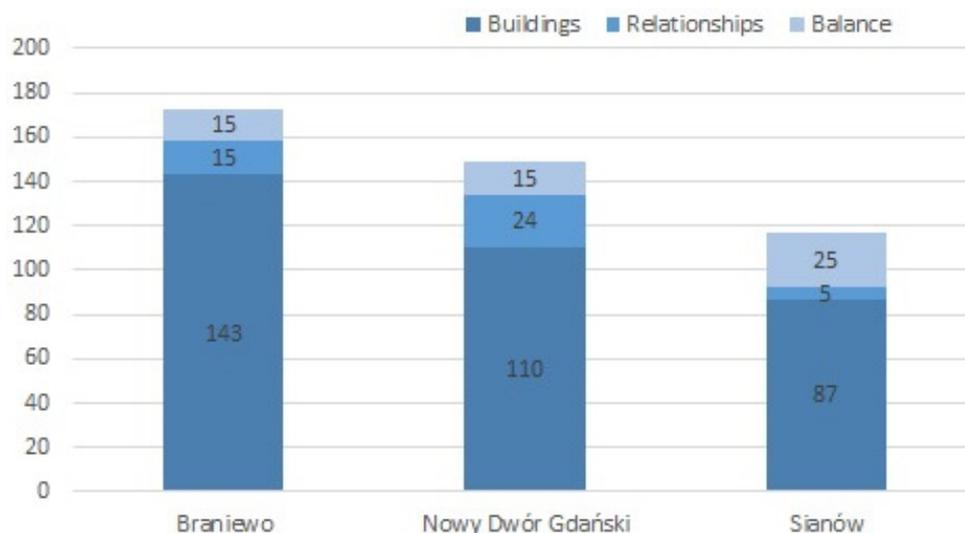
As mentioned before, each solution that implements modern technologies in a manner that emphasizes the cultural qualities of the town was awarded 5 points. Braniewo received 15 points, Nowy Dwór Gdański—also 15 points, and Sianów—25 points (Table 11).

**Table 11.** A list of solutions that implement modern technologies in a manner that emphasizes the cultural qualities of the town.

Solutions	Braniewo	Points	Nowy Dwór Gd.	Points	Sianów	Points
Mobile applications	East Green Velo Bicycle Route—a free mobile application for Android, IOS, and Windows Phone	5	Payments via moBILET and E-podróżnik on board of the cars of the Żuławy Commuter Railway	5	Sianów. A municipality with enthusiasm—a free application for tourists for both Android and IOS, with a QR code scanner	5
	A free mobile application for Android for the entire Pomeranian Way of St. James	5	A free mobile application for Android for the entire Pomeranian Way of St. James	5	A free mobile application for Android for the entire Pomeranian Way of St. James	5
	-	-	-	-	A free mobile application for Android for the Pomeranian Way of St. James in Zachodniopomorskie Province	5
	-	-	-	-	A free mobile application for IOS for the Pomeranian Way of St. James from Słupsk to Sławno	5
Other	Downloadable gpx files with the Eastern Green Velo Bicycle Route	5	Free wireless internet in the vicinity of the Tourist Information Point and a guide (in pdf format) with QR codes for the most important monuments of the municipality	22	A modern library	5
	total	15	total	24	total	25

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

BRB method can be a tool for comparison with other towns: Braniewo was ranked first Nowy Dwór Gdański—second, and Sianów—third (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Attractiveness of the cultural qualities of three Polish coastal Cittaslow towns to tourists and natives.

The study conducted using the BRB method is intended to show a spectrum of the attractiveness of Cittaslow towns to tourists and natives.

Empirical findings: despite the close proximity to the Baltic Sea, Nowy Dwór Gdański and Sianów not currently have any connection with it. Only in Braniewo in the place of the historic port, there is a modern marina. Also, only in Braniewo, there is a railway station, which makes it best connected to the city with an airport.

All towns have places of worship: six Braniewo and in Sianów and two in Nowy Dwór Gdański, one of which is a monuments. There are museums in Braniewo and Nowy Dwór Gdański. In Sianów, there was a Museum at the Match Factory, known all over Poland, after its bankruptcy, the museum was also closed, and the old history is mentioned in the “The Little Match Girls” statue.

There are libraries in each city that have adapted the workflow to the limitations of Covid-19. Particularly noteworthy is the library in Sianów, which not only has seven branches, but has also been ranked high and first in the competition for the best library in Poland and the Zachodniopomorskie Province for many years.

In addition, there are Culture Centers in every towns, other important buildings and townscape structures and street furniture. Therefore, it can be concluded that the architectural attractiveness of three towns is high both to tourists and natives.

On the other hand, the urban attractiveness of the examined towns is an insufficient. None of them has the town market square so characteristic of small towns. Its ruins (with a commemorative plaque) remained in Braniewo, but other towns did not have it at all. The lack of the main square as a meeting place for natives and tourists is to some extent compensated by the amphitheater in Braniewo, and the wooden footbridge over the Tuga River in Nowy Dwór Gdański. Places noteworthy are Zoological and Botanical Garden in Braniewo and Arboretum in Sianów. There are also parks and plazas for natives and tourists as well and numerous allotment gardens for natives.

There are grassroots initiatives in each town although only two has of the Civil Budget: in Braniewo from 2016, in Sianów from 2020. Furthermore in Braniewo there is the Green bench 2021 project to help residents of open housing estates to transform their backyards, and in Nowy Dwór Gdański Annual Tuga cleanup from 2009 to 2019.

Each towns use contemporary technologies like mobile applications for the entire Pomeranian Way of St. James. In Braniewo there is a free mobile application of East Green Velo Bicycle Route and possibility to downloadable gpx files with this route. In Sianów there is a free application for tourists. In Nowy Dwór Gdański there is free wireless internet in the vicinity of the Tourist Information Point and a guide with QR codes.

Theoretical advancements: the BRB method allows to study the attractiveness of not only Cittaslow towns but other small towns. Thus, it fills the gap in the study of small towns and gives the opportunity to discover and explore their endogenous potential.

Limitations of the study approach: the results of the study depend on the mindfulness of the researcher using qualitative and not statistical or numerical data. Not only a data query is important, but also a study visit to the towns. Helpful (although not obligatory) may be a survey conducted among the authorities or residents, which will confirm but expand the catalog of the listed facilities in BUILDINGS and RELATIONSHIP and solutions in BALANCE.

What seems to be particularly valuable for the attractiveness of small towns to tourists and natives is the activities and effects of grassroots initiatives of the inhabitants, as well as the use of modern technologies to highlight the cultural and natural qualities of the towns and to increase the quality of urban life.

Grassroots initiatives of the inhabitants depend on the creativity of the community of a particular city and it is difficult to anticipate them. From the experiences so far (apart from those listed in Table 9), orange snail sculptures are located in public spaces in the Cittaslow towns as an expression of approval for the town's membership in the Cittaslow movement [42]. There are also noteworthy the visual effects of the relations between the inhabitants and the town in Meldorf Cittaslow in Germany [42] like water pump knit wrapping on the main town market square (Figure 7) as well bicycle rack in the square in front of the town hall (Figure 8).

There are some modern technologies to highlight the cultural and natural qualities of the towns e.g., (1) putting QR codes on buildings with cultural values; (2) creating interactive boards located along educational paths led by areas of nature protection; (3) creating free mobile applications for Android, IOS, and Windows Phone like a guide to the most attractive areas of the town; (4) lighting buildings with cultural qualities in a way that emphasizes them.

Modern technologies to increase the quality of urban life include, among others (1) intelligent crossings for pedestrians, also known as active crossings, that are created in those sections where there is a particularly high risk—at schools, nursery schools, medical institutions; (2) active and changing street surface—the system calculates the behavior of road users on an ongoing basis and modifies the appearance of the passage in real time—its size, colour, displayed signs; when there are no pedestrians the crossing is not displayed, when the pedestrian traffic is very heavy the crossing becomes wider; (3) intelligent city lighting—the system adjusts the intensity of street lighting to weather conditions and the situation—more intense light during fog or rain will significantly reduce the risk of accidents; (4) a tool for intelligent water network management that collects data from sensors located throughout the city or town; (5) waste segregation system based on intelligent containers—these are containers that weigh the received bags with waste (previously marked with stickers with individual bar codes of households), send information about the weight to the central system and identify the thrower; the solution aims to raise the environmental awareness of the inhabitants and ensure a revolutionary leap in the efficiency of waste recycling.



**Figure 7.** The water pump in Meldorf, Germany (Photo by Alicja K. Zawadzka, 20 September 2018).



**Figure 8.** Bike rack in Meldorf, Germany (Photo by Alicja K. Zawadzka, 19 September 2018).

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