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Embracing the slow life: Assessing the performance of Turkey's slow cities in promoting sustainable urban resilience

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Abstract

This study examines and interprets the position of a slow city, or "Cittaslow", within sustainable urban planning that was caused by the adverse effects of globalisation, the Industrial Revolution and modernism. "Cittaslow" in Turkey is evaluated based on slow city projects, and the senses of each city, taking into account the current situation of sustainable urban planning. It defines and analyses sustainable urban planning throughout time, and processes sustainability as a term in various approaches. Slow city membership criteria were analyzed for the selected 7 slow cities in Turkey and the results were presented. Throughout these evaluations and suggestions, it is observed that sustainable urban planning and the Cittaslow movement are parallel to each other regarding urban life indicators. Finally, it is concluded that by integrating the criteria of Cittaslow into the cities, the Cittaslow movement can be implemented as a local, sustainable city development model.

Keywords: slow city, cittaslow, sustainable urban planning, slow movement, slow cities in Turkey

1. Introduction

While human beings live on earth, they also constantly fight, try to establish balance, and strive to be harmonious. Humankind has struggled with nature since its existence and has always wanted to shape nature in accordance with its wishes. The world and cities, which are, today, rapidly shaped and transformed by globalisation and global warming, have become places where many architectural issues are examined. In parallel with many technological developments, the world has faced environmental disasters such as population growth and the accompanying environmental pollution, reduction of forest areas and natural resources, increase in toxic waste, global warming and damage to the ozone layer. The continuation of human existence, i.e. sustainability, is possible with the correct use of earth resources, measures taken against environmental pollution, and proper architectural and urban design and policies. 'Sustainability' and 'sustainable urban planning' are a set of activities that have been examined for years, handled from many different perspectives, and aim to 'benefit people and the environment'. The concept of sustainability gains more meaning with the organisation of states, governments and non-governmental organisations as well as the significant impact of public awareness.

The slow city movement is an association of cities that refuse to be one of the cities which have emerged with globalisation and become uniform and want to preserve their local identity and characteristics. The concept of slow city, which adopts the concept of sustainable urban planning and sustainable development as a policy, emphasises that the environment, urban infrastructure, and economic and social order should be formed in a sustainable way.

Sustainability is defined as "ensuring the long-term survival of socially shaped relationships between society and nature" (Tosun, 1996). All studies on the concept of sustainability emphasise

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that economic, ecological, and social sustainability are independent but complementary components, and that the issue should be examined under these three headings with a holistic approach in order to achieve sustainable development goals. A sustainable future is possible when ecological, social, economic and architectural sustainability is achieved all together.

Today, 2 per cent of the earth's surface is covered by urban areas and people living in cities constitute 75 per cent of the world's population. With the acceleration of urbanisation worldwide, cities' number, population and complexity have also increased. According to the United Nations publications, there are over 8 billion people living in the world (UNPF, 2024). Rapid population growth in cities leads to dense construction and reduction of green areas, increasing energy consumption, intensifies environmental pollution and toxic waste generation, as well as accelerating climate change.

In the rapidly developing world order after the Industrial Revolution, people's lifestyles have also started to change rapidly. Especially people living in big city centres have been directed to work more, live faster and consume faster. In cities where the concept of time is more important, eating habits have also changed from traditional family tables to an urban form in which fast eating situations occur. Human beings feel the need for a slower and more environmentally friendly lifestyle in the fast-paced urban environments that do not meet their needs in terms of environment and quality of life. The philosophy of slowness, which forms the basis of the concept of the slow city, is based on the philosophy of using the moment and time effectively, not slowing down. The Slow Movement is a social movement that criticises fast modern life and advocates socio-cultural progress that will transform and change the speed and consumption patterns of the age in different parts of life (such as eating habits, economic order, social relations, etc.). With the increase in the use of machinery, the foods consumed started to turn into long-lasting shelf products, and the quality of the foods consumed also started to decrease. As a common result of all these; the concept of 'fast food', which has developed in this direction due to its fast preparation and fast service, is a modern world problem that has been accepted by all scientific circles and spread all over the world, as it is a wrong diet and harmful to health. With the chain reaction of all these reasons, the search for a healthy environment and a healthy life has emerged, and scientific circles and many health organizations have organized congresses to raise awareness of this culture. Thus, the slow food manifesto was published and the components of slow food movements were determined.

Thus, the understanding of sustainable urban planning must be based not only on profit and economic benefit, but also on environmentally sensitive and humanist values. Human scale, car-free transport, diversity, healthy housing, workplaces and public facilities are the main components required for a sustainable city. Cities that continue their ecological activities locally create their own internal potential and are the practical equivalent of sustainable development. The 'self-sufficient city' model, which is selected as a sustainable city model over the existing city models, stands out ecologically compared to other models while pointing to the concept of a slow city in a more developed way compared to city layouts within the scope of sustainable urban planning.

Cittaslow (Slow City) is an association of municipalities founded in Italy in 1999 and centred in Orvieto. The Slow City movement has members in more than 300 cities from 36 countries around the world, including 25 cities in Turkey (Cittaslow Türkiye, 2024). The growth of the Slow Movement and its influence on many disciplines formed the basis for the formation of the concept of Cittaslow. The purpose of the establishment of the Slow City movement is to prevent the standardisation and uniformisation that emerge as a result of globalisation by protecting the identities of cities. The Association advocates that the management styles of cities should be in a developing structure by giving importance to local architectural identity, local food, traditions/customs, artisans and craftsmen. These values that need to be protected are tried to be ensured through the criteria established by the Union for member cities. The criteria have also been developed to create and

maintain sustainable cities, advocating the use of environmentally friendly, renewable energy and improving urban quality.

The argument of this study is based on a comparative analysis of the current situation of the slow city concept in Turkey. The research was conducted through collection of data for the selected slow cities in Turkey and comparatively evaluating the results in terms of application rates.

2. Literature Review

Knox (2005) emphasized the importance of theoretical knowledge by examining the relationship between urban design and the social deconstruction of space. It is focused on how globalization and Slow Urban movement affect the pace of life, routine encounters and shared experiences of urban environments. Pink (2009) also examined the importance of smaller urban contexts for the comparative analysis of contemporary urban social movements. For this purpose, she analyzed the Cittàslow movement and investigated how local concerns related to larger environmental problems contribute to the processes of social change. Examining the research and practice challenges in achieving sustainable cities, Williams (2009) emphasized the importance of understanding diverse visions of urbanism and the interplay between social and technical solutions for sustainable urban development. She argued that it is necessary to move beyond the "one-size-fits-all model" approach to appreciate the multiplicity of potential futures. Ball (2015) reviewed the development and principles of the Cittaslow movement by analyzing its growth, membership criteria, and the balance it seeks between preserving local uniqueness and embracing new technologies. She concluded that while the movement promotes a sustainable, slow lifestyle, it also faces challenges in maintaining the uniqueness of participating towns while integrating ideas from diverse cultures. Farelnik and Stanowicka (2016) examined the characteristics of two development concepts for modern cities (smart city and slow city) and explored the potential to combine them into a “smart slow city” model. They suggested that this combination could lead to cities prioritizing residents' quality of life while utilizing modern technological solutions, as part of the Cittaslow network.

Pink (2007) examined the sensory aspects of Slow Food movements and slow living in the Cittàslow, emphasizing that they focus on sensory pleasure and long-term pleasure as an alternative to the frenzy of modern fast life. In this study, it has been investigated how routine and creative sensory practices shape the concept of a "sensory city" through Aylsham's Cittàslow events and projects as case studies. Mayer and Knox (2009) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the Slow City movement by examining case studies from Italy, Germany, and the UK, employing a set of 54 action-oriented criteria. They concluded that these towns effectively implement sustainable urban development practices, enhancing community quality of life by preserving local traditions and fostering a relaxed pace of life. Carp (2012) conducted an extensive analysis of the Slow Movement by examining case studies in the United States, focusing on Slow Food and Cittaslow networks and their impact on social-ecological resilience. The study concluded that these networks increase local and global sustainability by successfully integrating environmental responsibility with community participation. Farelnik (2020) conducted a study on development opportunities of small cities in Poland, particularly in the fields of tourism and urban promotion through cooperation within the Cittaslow network. This cooperation transforms city competition into effective collaboration, offering a chance to create unique development models for small cities. Batyk et.al. (2021) conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Polish Cittaslow Network using various statistical methods and data sources to evaluate renewable energy deployment. They concluded that renewable energy support is low, mainly due to urgent social and economic problems, and has not significantly improved the quality of life in these municipalities.

Keskin (2012) conducted a literature review to explore the Cittaslow (Slow City) approach as a unique perspective on sustainable urbanization. He commented that understanding the criteria for becoming a Slow City and the movement's historical and global context helps promote sustainable urban development. Deniz (2017) evaluated the Slow City (Cittaslow) model, which serves sustainable tourism by preserving environmental and cultural values and encouraging localism. He

concluded that slow cities are necessary to promote self-sufficient, socially engaging communities that benefit from technology and branding for sustainable development. Özür (2016) studied the context of urban geography and locality within the slow city/Cittaslow movement in Turkey and proposed a new settlement approach to bring innovation and change to urban planning. Çıtak and Özmen (2016) conducted field research through participant observation and in-depth interviews in 9 slow cities in Turkey. They concluded that while the Cittaslow brand increases tourist numbers, it challenges the "slow" nature of these cities, suggesting sustainable tourism strategies to protect environmental and cultural values. Koç and Baz (2020) adopted a descriptive approach to study the Cittaslow movement in Turkey, to determine the cities that meet or adapt to the criteria of the slow movement. They concluded that understanding and applying these criteria can open Turkish slow cities with rich historical and cultural heritage to the world, enhancing local and visitor quality of life. Erdogan (2016) conducted interviews at the center of Gökçeada to evaluate local perceptions and expectations about the Cittaslow phenomenon. She concluded that the residents were knowledgeable about the concept and positively considered Gokceada's designation as a Cittaslow due to the advantages it provided. Kocaman (2020) examined the intersection of smart city and slow city characteristics, focusing in particular on Gökçeada, the only Cittaslow island in the world. He has proposed smart city applications that will improve urban life without compromising slow city features and aim to make residents' lives easier.

3. Methodology

In this study, 7 slow cities were selected along with Seferihisar, which is the first member out of 25 slow cities in Turkey. These cities are Seferihisar, Taraklı, Yalvaç, Vize, Gökçeada, Yenipazar and Halfeti. Membership criteria and application rates have been determined based on the data collected from municipalities and city applications. In the documents examined according to membership criteria, which criteria were applied and which were met were compiled. Then, the application rates of membership criteria in slow cities were calculated and the analysis results were presented in tables and comparative graphs. Finally, recommendations have been developed for criteria that are non-applied.

3.1. Slow City Membership Criteria

Slow city membership criteria is generally analysed under 7 main headings (Cittaslow Türkiye, 2024). The criteria addressed under each heading are considered mandatory criteria, perspective criteria or other criteria (non-mandatory criteria).

Energy and environmental policies; slow city criteria basically cover the criteria necessary for urban life (parks and green areas, renewable energy, transport, recycling, etc.). The features that are important in forming the foundations of the concept of sustainability and increasing the city's living standards have been established under these criteria. Cities that meet these criteria are strong candidates for membership.

Infrastructure policies include criteria that increase the livability level of cities and add value to the city in terms of architectural comfort (alternative mobility, cycle paths, street furniture, etc.).

Quality of urban life policies are the criteria that add vision to the city and ensure that the conditions necessary for the continuation of membership are on solid ground. These criteria support the concept of a sustainable city by giving identity to the city or by enabling the existing architectural identity to stand out (requalification and reuse of marginal areas, cable network city - fibre optics, wireless, etc.).

Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies are the criteria that protect the environment and the welfare of the local people (prohibiting the use of GMOs in agriculture, increasing the value of working techniques and traditional crafts, etc.), observe the existence of a society that is sensitive to natural areas, and form the basis of sustainable development. It constitutes the main principles of the Slow Food movement, which gave birth to the philosophy of slow city.

Policies for hospitality, awareness and training are necessary criteria for adopting the philosophy of slow city to the public, starting the movement from the grassroots and promoting the city (good welcome, increasing awareness of operators and traders, transparency of offers and practised prices, clear visibility of tariffs, etc.). Cities that fulfil these criteria have an advantage in the membership process.

Social cohesion refers to a peaceful, comfortable, and socially solidarity-oriented lifestyle for city dwellers (integration of disabled people, poverty, minorities discriminated, etc.).

Partnerships; It covers all activities related to the Slow Food philosophy, which forms the basis and starting point of the concept of Slow City (collaboration with other organizations promoting natural and traditional food, etc.)

Figure 1 shows the method steps of the study. As a first step, the criteria for Slow City Membership were briefly defined. Next, the slow cities in Turkey were listed and the slow cities selected from them were analyzed. The implemented criteria and the relevant rates were determined based on the data collected from the municipalities and the city's applications. Then, the analysis results were evaluated by calculating the application rates of the membership criteria in slow cities. Finally, recommendations were developed for the criteria that were not applied.

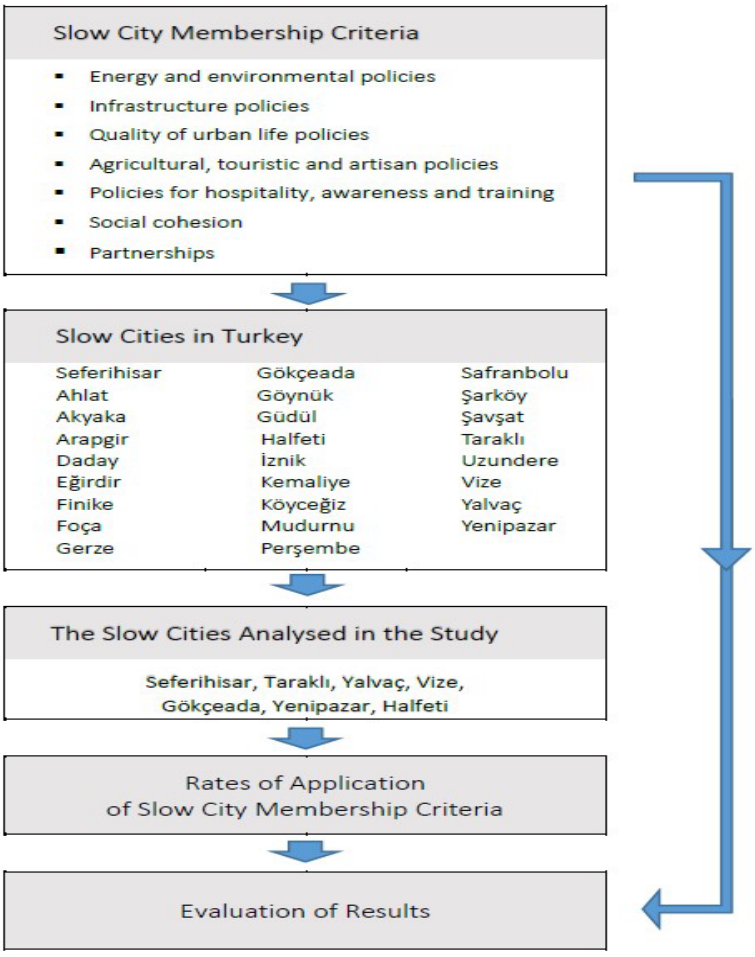

Figure 1 The steps of the method

3.2. Slow Cities in Turkey

Since Seferihisar is the first slow city of Turkey, other cities have also been approved by Seferihisar. After Seferihisar, Ahlat, Akyaka, Arapgir, Daday, Eğirdir, Finike, Foça, Gerze, Gökçeada, Göynük, Güdül, Halfeti, İznik, Kemaliye, Köyceğiz, Mudurnu, Perşembe, Safranbolu, Şarköy, Şavşat, Taraklı, Uzundere, Vize, Yalvaç and Yenipazar were accepted to membership, respectively. Although

the Slow City membership of Taraklı was withdrawn, it is also included in the study. The map of Turkey's slow cities is as shown in Figure 2.

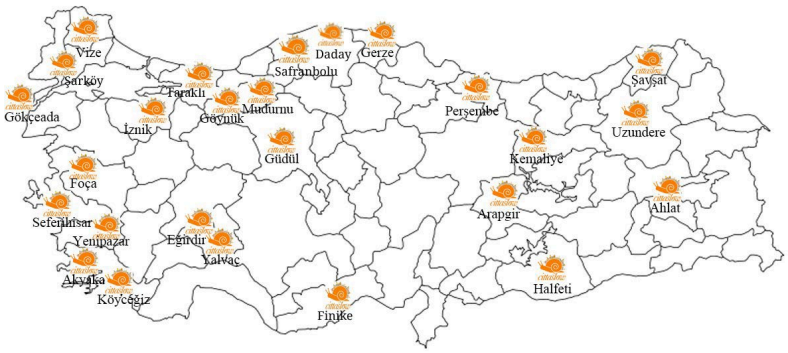

Figure 2 Slow cities in Turkey

In this study, Seferihisar, Taraklı, Yalvaç, Vize, Gökçeada, Yenipazar and Halfeti (Table 1), which are among the first resident cities in Turkey, were analysed in terms of the implemented membership application criteria.

Table 1 The Studied Slow Cities in Turkey (Cittaslow Türkiye, 2024; Enuygun, 2024)

cittaslow TURKEY	 Seferihisar
 Taraklı	 Yalvaç
 Vize	 Gökçeada
 Yenipazar	 Halfeti

3.3. Analyses

Data on membership criteria were collected from municipalities and city applications, and the membership criteria of cities were examined. As a result of the analysis study, the applied and non-applied criteria are shown in Table 2. In the table, the cities where the criteria for slow city membership were applied are marked in grey (Aydoğan, 2015).

Table 2 Examination of Slow City Membership Criteria (Aydoğan, 2015)

(■ Applied criteria □ Non-applied criteria)

		SLOW CITY MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA	SEFERIHISAR	TARAKLI	YALVAÇ	VIZE	GÖKÇEADA	YENIPAZAR	HALFETI
1.Energy and Environmental Policies	1	Documentation that air cleanliness is within the parameters specified by law	■	■	□	■	■	□	□
	2	Documentation of water cleanliness within the parameters specified by law	■	■	■	□	■	■	□
	3	Comparison of public drinking water consumption with the national average	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
	4	Collection of municipal solid waste by separation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	5	Supporting industrial and domestic composting	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
	6	Availability of wastewater treatment plant for urban or collective sewerage	■	■	■	□	□	■	■
	7	Energy saving in buildings and public areas	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
	8	Public energy production from renewable energy sources	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
	9	Reduction of visual pollution and traffic noise	■	■	■	□	□	■	■
	10	Reducing public light pollution	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
	11	Electric energy consumption per household	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
	12	Biodiversity conservation	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
2. Infrastructure Policies	1	Efficient cycle paths connected to public buildings	■	□	■	□	□	■	■
	2	Comparison of existing bicycle lanes with vehicle lanes in terms of kilometres	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
	3	Bicycle parking spaces at transfer centres such as metro and bus stops	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
	4	Eco transport planning as an alternative to private car use	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
	5	Removal of architectural barriers for the disabled	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
	6	Family life and initiatives for pregnant women	■	□	□	□	□	■	□
	7	Confirmed accessibility to health services	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	8	Sustainable distribution of goods in urban centres	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
	9	Proportion of city dwellers working outside the city	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. Quality of Urban Life Policies	1	Planning for urban resilience	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	2	Programmes for the enhancement of urban values, increasing the value of city centres and public buildings	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	3	Improvement and/or creation of social green areas by using productive plants and fruit trees	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	4	Increasing urban liveability	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	5	Re-evaluation and utilisation of marginal areas	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	6	Utilising information and communication technologies in the development of interactive services for citizens and tourists	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	7	Establishing a service desk for sustainable architecture	■	□	□	■	□	□	□
	8	The city has an internet network	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	9	Monitoring and reduction of pollutants	■	□	■	■	□	□	■
	10	Development of teleworking	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
	11	Promotion of personal sustainable urban planning	■	■	□	■	■	□	□
	12	Supporting social infrastructure	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
	13	Promotion of public sustainable urban planning	■	■	■	■	■	□	□
	14	Utilisation of useful green areas in the city with productive plants	■	□	■	■	■	■	■

	16	Creating spaces for the commercialisation of local products							
	17	Amount of concrete used in green areas							
SLOW CITY MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA			SEFERIHISAR	TARAKLI	YALVAÇ	VIZE	GÖKÇEADA	YENIPAZAR	HALFETI
4. Agricultural, Touristic and Artisan Policies	1	Development of agroecology							
	2	Protection of handmade and labelled or branded artisan products							
	3	Increasing the value of traditional work techniques and crafts							
	4	Increasing the value of rural areas by increasing the access of rural residents to services							
	5	Use of local and, if possible, organic products in public restaurants (school canteens, soup kitchens, etc.)							
	6	Provide flavour training for personal and catering use and encourage the use of organic local products where possible							
	7	Protecting local and traditional cultural activities and increasing their value							
	8	Increasing hotel capacities							
	9	Banning the use of GMOs in agriculture							
	10	The existence of new ideas for development plans for the use of land previously used for agriculture							
5. Policies for Hospitality, Awareness and	1	Good welcome							
	2	Raising awareness of tradesmen and operators							
	3	Existence of slow routes							
	4	Adoption of active techniques to ensure bottom-up participation in important managerial decisions							
	5	Continuous training of trainers, managers and staff on Cittaslow themes							
	6	Health trainings							
	7	To provide systematic and permanent education to local people about the meaning of Cittaslow							
	8	Active presence of associations working with local government on Cittaslow							
	9	Supporting Cittaslow campaigns							
	10	Use of the Cittaslow logo on the website and letterhead							
6. Social Cohesion	1	Work against discrimination against minorities							
	2	People with different ethnic origins living in the same neighbourhood							
	3	Integration of persons with disabilities							
	4	Supporting childcare							
	5	Employment status of the young generation							
	6	Poverty							
	7	Existence of social partnerships/civil society organisations							
	8	Integration of different cultures							
	9	Participation in politics							
	10	Municipality's investment in public housing							
7.Partnerships	1	Support for Slowfood activities and campaigns							
	2	Supporting natural and traditional foods through Slowfood or other organisations							
	3	Supporting twinning projects and co-operating with developing countries to develop Cittaslow and Slowfood philosophies in a way that will also ensure their dissemination							

3.4. Rates of Application of Slow City Membership Criteria

The evaluation were made according to the rates determined using the applied membership criteria presented in Table 2. For each criterion, calculations were made based on the ratio of the

requirements met to the total number of requirements. The graph in Figure 3 shows comparative rates for each criterion for the selected slow cities in Turkey.

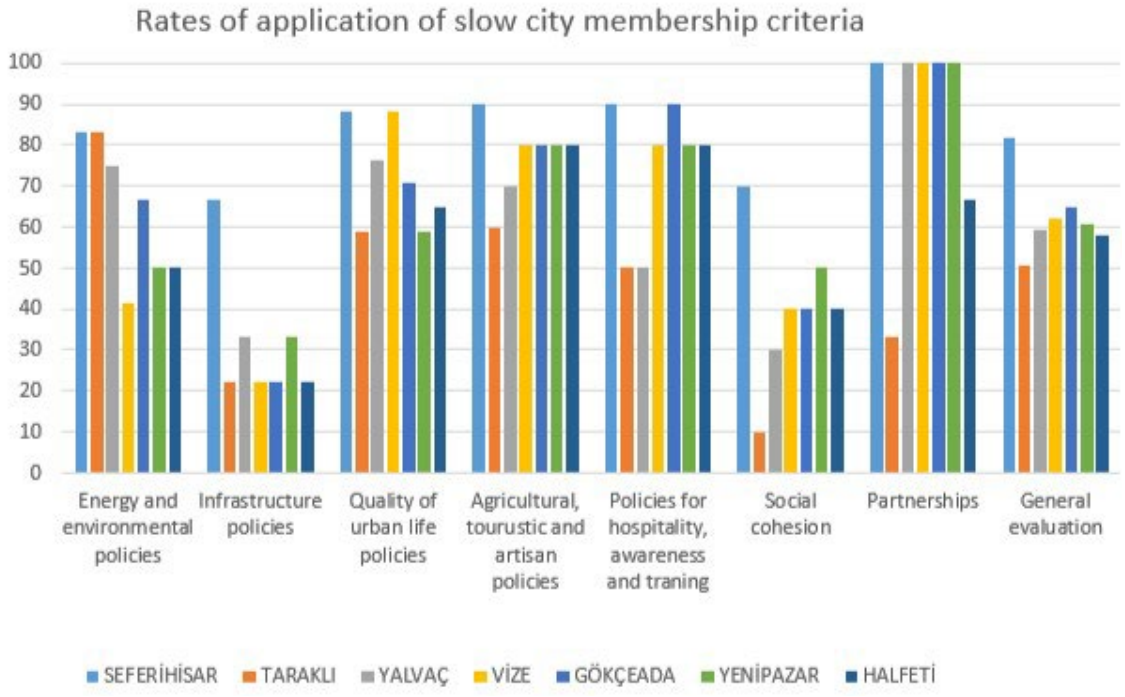

Figure 3 Rates of application of slow city membership criteria (Aydoğan, 2015)

3.5. Result and Discussion

According to Table 2 and Figure 3, the results show that the town that best fulfils the criteria for the membership of slow city in Turkey is Seferihisar, which is Turkey's first slow city, and it is of great importance in terms of setting an example and pioneering the other cities. Seferihisar's work on the environment, infrastructure and urban quality of life policies, which are the criteria that most support the concept of sustainable architecture among the criteria for membership as a resident city, are in the best condition compared to other cities. It is clearly seen that the fulfilment rates of other criteria are also above the average.

Although the town Taraklı is at the same level as Seferihisar in terms of energy and environmental criteria, it exhibited a weak situation that needs to be improved within the scope of infrastructure works. Its work on the quality of urban life is also above average, but can be improved. In the criteria related to social cohesion and partnerships, the town's percentages are low and need to be improved. In general, it has the lowest values in terms of meeting the criteria.

The town Yalvaç was found to be quite good regarding energy and environmental and quality of urban life criteria. However, it is well below the average in terms of infrastructure and social cohesion criteria.

The town Vize exhibited a very weak performance on energy, environmental, and infrastructure policies, but was above average in other criteria.

Gökçeada is the town with the highest overall percentage of meeting the criteria after Seferihisar. Gökçeada's work on the criteria was found to be open to improvement and positive in terms of cooperation with universities and institutions. However, Gökçeada's work on infrastructure was noted as below average.

Although the town Yenipazar was one of the first inhabited cities, its work is at an average level and needs to be developed. Projects related to the environment, infrastructure, and quality of urban life should also be developed.

Halfeti town fulfills the criteria above average. As a new member of the slow city, its infrastructure work is at a low level.

When a general assessment was made in terms of Slow City membership criteria, the following results were reached (Aydoğan, & Akşit, 2016):

- **In terms of energy and environmental policies;**

It has been observed that Seferihisar has a more professional approach to the criteria compared to other towns, there are many projects regarding the use of renewable energy in the town. It has one of the largest solar power plants in Turkey and solar energy is widely used in outdoor lighting. Comprehensive studies are carried out on issues such as energy efficiency training. The number of Blue Flag beaches, symbolising safety and cleanliness, is quite high. Taraklı town has natural features in air, water and soil quality since there is no industrialisation. The use of renewable energy is in the form of obtaining hot water from solar energy and is at the local level. In Yalvaç town, in order to prevent environmental pollution within the scope of sustainable development, in addition to the treatment plant with chemical and biological treatment functions, a solid waste facility has been established and gas and electricity production is provided. In the Vize town, renewable energy is used at the local level in the form of obtaining hot water from solar energy. Gökçeada is the world's first and only slow island. In addition to solar energy, it is also a slow city that uses wind energy intensively. In the Yenipazar town, environmental policies are at the local level, such as the municipality's incentives for waste collection and sorting. However, it has a wastewater treatment plant, which is not available even in larger non-quiet towns. Halfeti is one of the weakest towns in terms of energy and environmental policies; activities are at the local level, such as signage regulation and light pollution measures. Although its potential is very high, the utilisation of solar energy is very low.

- **In terms of infrastructure policies;**

Seferihisar carries out studies on surveying and restoration in the town, and excavations are carried out in the ancient city of Teos. There are municipal projects such as making public buildings suitable for disabled use, bicycle paths, and pedestrianisation. Taraklı town has a good level of protection of historical values. There are registered examples of civil architecture and natural cultural assets, and local materials are used in the survey and restoration works. Yalvaç town is a slow city that preserves its urban texture with its museums and streets with historical houses. There are also green area arrangements and registered plane trees. In the Vize town, urban design and development projects have been carried out in archaeological sites, and emphasis is placed on the use of green areas and arrangements for disabled people. Gökçeada is a town that attaches importance to protecting historical and cultural sites and encourages cycling in the island. In Yenipazar and Halfeti, infrastructure policies are at a more local level, and in Halfeti, the coastline with urban protected areas is protected.

- **In terms of quality of urban life policies;**

Seferihisar attaches importance to thermal tourism and ensures that the water-cooled in hot water springs is used in greenhouses. The town has technological quality and noise pollution standards. Taraklı provides technological network services at the local level. Yalvaç utilises public contribution in landscaping and has established a city information system. Vize provides technological local network services, especially for students; intercity traffic has been taken out of the town. In Gökçeada, there are voluntary incentives for bioregional architecture and greenhouses have been established for growing flowers and plants. Within the scope of colour regulation, houses are painted with natural white whitewash or left as stone facades. In Halfeti, colour regulation has also been done in the buildings, but together with Yenipazar, it is in a situation that needs to be developed in urban life policies.

- **In terms of agricultural, touristic and artisan policies,**

In this criteria, Turkey's cities are at a very good level in terms of utilising their potential. All of them are committed to protecting their existing local values and encouraging tradesmen and the public to sustainable development.

Seferihisar has branded its Satsuma, encourages organic agriculture, and established a cooperative with local producers. It has established vegetable gardens in schools, local markets and seasonal cycle awareness in practice. Taraklı also supports local production and entrepreneurs are trained. Yalvaç has been declared an Eco-Agricultural Zone and stands out in animal husbandry, livestock breeding, fruit growing and organic agriculture. Organic beekeeping is being developed in Vize, and training on local old professions is provided. Gastronomic culture in Gökçeada is at a very good level in terms of the continuity and diversity of local product production activities. Yenipazar is significantly good in producing products such as olives, olive oil, figs, honey and chestnuts with local producers and supports women's manual labour. Halfeti is at a level that needs to improve in this criteria, but craftsmen are supported and organic vegetable and fruit growing is encouraged.

- **In terms of hospitality, awareness and training policies;**

Seferihisar has established a City Council and established protocols with universities to raise awareness as a pioneering slow city. Taraklı, Yalvaç and Vize have established touristic routes to develop tourism. The facilities are sufficient and functional. Unlike other cities, Gökçeada emphasises agro-tourism in the training given to the people of the town. In Halfeti, pension and hotel reception training has been emphasised and routes of historical and natural places have been created. Yenipazar has provided foreign language training to the municipality staff in cooperation with tourism and is in need of improvement in this criteria.

- **In terms of social cohesion;**

In all slow cities, social assistance activities are available in all areas within the scope of cooperation with municipalities based on volunteerism. However, Seferihisar has emphasised the importance of the slow city at the level of consciousness by establishing a children's municipality within the scope of a UNICEF-supported child-friendly city. The municipality carries out projects with tradesmen and organises fairs, courses, and training activities. All other cities are at the local level that need to be developed.

- **In terms of partnerships;**

These criteria is extremely important as 'slow food' forms the basis of the concept of 'Slow City'. Cities can highlight the flavours specific to their traditional cuisine and try to carry these flavours into the future. Taraklı and Halfeti are at a level where they need to improve themselves in this criteria.

4. Conclusions

All seven slow cities examined have high realization rates in terms of agriculture, tourism, artisan policies and partnerships. In contrast, the values in infrastructure and social cohesion are lower compared to other criteria. The cities have very high values in local production, which is crucial for sustainable development. To enhance their visibility, they place importance on branding and promotional activities, especially in tourism. Although, their realization rates in urban life quality, energy and environment, hospitality, awareness, and training policies are quite good, it is important to pay more attention to these areas.

Cultural heritage and traditional architecture is generally seen to be effective in slow cities in Turkey, however, no sufficiently detailed study has been observed on slow city concept in urban planning related issues. Urban comfort criteria such as environment, infrastructure and urban life policy in slow cities should be addressed with longer-term projects. The methods for providing the criteria of slow cities should be provided with more forward-looking and radical solutions. In order to make cities more accessible, they need to be improved in terms of infrastructure and urban

planning. Apart from sustainable social life, sustainable criteria should also be followed in building design and construction stages which is essential for sustainable urban planning in the future.

The increase in the number of member cities has led to an increase in the number of candidate cities. Although the concept of Slow City is a new concept in Turkey, efforts to involve cities in membership are ongoing and the number of cities willing and candidate for membership is increasing. The movement that started in the town Seferihisar is an example to other cities and local municipalities as a sustainable and local development model. The Slow City formation in Turkey has significant potential in terms of revealing the historical heritage of other cities, emphasizing the architectural urban identity and creating sustainable pilot cities where renewable energy sources are used.

Note

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Resume

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