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## THE *MILIEU* OF HISTORICAL CITIES AS A FACTOR OF THEIR ATTRACTIVENESS AND DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

Among the factors determining the attractiveness of a town as a locational choice of economic entities, venue of meetings and various kinds of events, and place of residence, is its environment (or 'climate'), called by the French term *milieu*.

Various definitions of this term can be found in the literature, but it seems that first and foremost it is a resultant of the locational factors to be found in the town. It may even be an effect of synergy among these factors, which is responsible for the fact that a particular town develops more rapidly than others. One of the crucial components of the *milieu* is the town's material heritage, which gives it its historical identity. It consists primarily of buildings representing old architectural styles. Though they are a separate element of the town's spatial development in themselves, their value increases when they make up a historic urban layout usually called 'the old town', a 'residence', a 'palace complex', etc.

The *milieu* of the town is also defined by its past, that is, events that occurred there and political decisions that were made, and that were important for the history of a given country or continent, or even the world.

The *milieu* is also the product of urban communities, traditions kept up, customs observed, events organised. Of no small importance for the attractiveness of towns is their spatial-functional structure, especially the coexistence of old buildings and nature. Particularly highly esteemed is the *milieu* of historic cities. Most of them are not merely relics of the past, but are dynamic spatial-structural patterns with strictly defined functions, including metropolitan. The aim of the present paper is to show what functions can develop in historic cities and determine their growth pattern.

# 1. Functions of Historic Cities

Historic cities can be shown to have many functions. There is no doubt that they are: (1) tourist centres, (2) venues of cultural, amusement and sports events, (3) venues of scientific congresses, (4) venues of political meetings, (5) seats of the headquarters of large, supra-national firms and (6) attractive residential places, especially for wealthy people. What attracts visitors to them are first of all (1) their layout, (2) architectural monuments, (3) cultural institutions, (4) green spaces, (5) history and (6) cultural events.

These elements of a city's internal structure and spatial development determine its level of attractiveness, make it a popular destination with visitors, contribute to its being treated as a cultural centre, chosen as a venue where scientific meetings are organised, considered as the location of management boards of international firms, and an attractive place of residence (see Fig. 1).

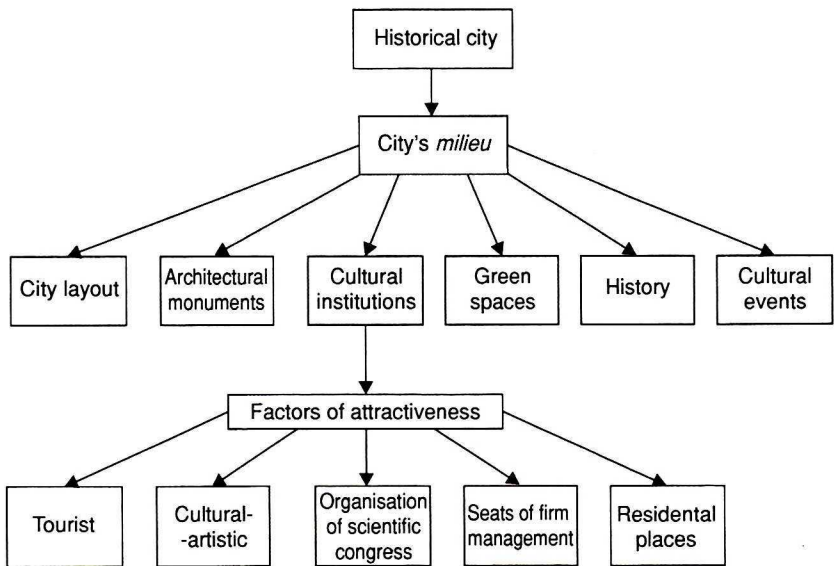


Fig. 1. *City's milieu* and factors of its attractiveness

Source: Own work.

## **1.1. Historic cities as tourist centres**

Historic cities most popular with tourists are primarily those which feature top-class architectural monuments (ecclesiastical and secular), museums, galleries, cultural centres, theatres, concert halls, etc. An equally important factor drawing visitors to historic cities is their traditions which, kept up over the centuries, have become characteristic of the given city.

There are many symbols that everybody associates only and exclusively with certain places. If traditional elements of some cultures have survived until today, it is proof of how deeply they have been rooted in the life of the residents and how strongly they have influenced immigrants. One can quote plenty of examples. What is essential, however, is that historic cities have extensive possibilities of drawing tourists using their cultural heritage and traditions as the attraction. The vast number of visitors coming to historic cities each year is a stimulus for the development of tourist infrastructure. The tourist base consists primarily of hotels and pensions (boarding houses) and a dense network of bars, restaurants, cafés, and shops.

The ever-heavier tourist traffic requires the expansion and modernisation of transport facilities, in particular the enlargement and improvement of the performance of railway and coach stations and airports. Most of European airports are being continually expanded. In the recent years the airports in Vienna, Copenhagen and Amsterdam have been greatly developed. In preparation for the Olympic Games, a brand new airport is being built in Athens.

## **1.2. Historic cities as venues of cultural, amusement and sports events**

Cultural and amusement events are held continually in Europe's major historic cities; they have a European and world impact (Table 1).

What deserves special attention are festivities organised during regional holidays. Their aim is to remind the inhabitants of and acquaint visitors with the old customs and traditions that have survived in the given city (e.g., the gondoliers' race along the canals of Venice or the marathon across the bridges of Amsterdam) or its cultural heritage (e.g., the festival of religious music in Florence). Such events are usually organised on the day of the city's patron saint. Other kinds of cultural and amusement events may not be connected with a city historically or culturally, but their goal is to promote the city (e.g., the Tour de France

Table 1

## Major cultural and amusement events held in historic cities

City	Events
1. Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* North Sea Jazz Festival</li> <li>* HOLLAND FESTIVAL of classical music</li> <li>* Flower Festival</li> <li>* KONIN GINNEDAG, world's largest flea market</li> <li>* Amsterdam Kite Festival</li> <li>* GRACHTEN LOOP, marathon along canals</li> </ul>
2. Barcelona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* European FESTIVAL DE JAZZ CIUTAT VELLA</li> <li>* international CAIXA FLAMENCO FESTIVAL</li> <li>* theatre days, MARATO DE L'ESPECTACLE</li> <li>* film festival</li> </ul>
3. Bologna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* classical music festival BOLOGNA SOGNO</li> <li>* days of Bologna's patron saint, FERRAGOSTO</li> </ul>
4. Budapest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Budapest Spring Festival</li> <li>* Balaton Festival</li> <li>* Opera and Ballet Festival</li> <li>* International HUNGEXPO Fair</li> <li>* St. Stephen's Day</li> <li>* Anna's balls</li> <li>* International Wine Festival</li> </ul>
5. Florence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* church music festival SAGRA MUSICALE LUCCHESE</li> <li>* art festival MAGGIO MUSICALE</li> <li>* biennial antiques fair MOSTRA MERCATO INTERNAZIONALE DELL'ANTIQUARIATO</li> <li>* Tuscan film festival FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI</li> <li>* fashion shows by top Italian designers PITTI IMMAGINE UOMO, PITTI IMMAGINE DONNA and PITTI IMMAGINE BIMBO</li> <li>* football matches in historical costume CALCIO IN COSTUME</li> </ul>
6. Cologne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* classical music and jazz concerts</li> <li>* 'Three Crazy Days', DREI TOLLEN TAGE – pageants, costume balls, etc.</li> </ul>
7. London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*summer festivals of classical music</li> <li>* INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL</li> <li>* CHELSEA ANTIQUES FAIR</li> <li>* OAK APPLE DAY commemorating flight of Charles II before Parliament army</li> <li>* LONDON MARATHON</li> <li>* FA CUP FINAL</li> <li>* WIMBLEDON LAWN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP</li> </ul>

8. Paris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* FÊTE DE LA MUSIC</li> <li>* FÊTE DU CINEMA</li> <li>* International Contemporary Art Fair – FOIRE INTERNATIONALE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN</li> <li>* international art fair DECOUVERTES</li> <li>* international fair FOIRE DE PARIS – PARIS EXPO</li> <li>* fashion shows</li> <li>* TOUR DE FRANCE bicycle race</li> <li>* PARIS TENNIS OPEN</li> </ul>
9. Prague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* summer concerts</li> <li>* international classical music concerts PRAGUE AUTUMN</li> <li>* GRAND PARDUBICE STEEPLECHASE horse race</li> </ul>
10. Rome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Rome's anniversary</li> <li>* feast day of Rome's patron saint, FESTA DI SAN PETRO</li> <li>* WINE FESTIVAL</li> <li>* dedication of cars, buses and trams, FESTA DI SANTA FRANCESCA ROMANA</li> </ul>
11. Venice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Venetian carnival BACANAL DEL GNOCO – masked parade</li> <li>* film festival</li> <li>* feast day of Venice's patron saint, FESTA DI SAN MARCO</li> <li>* marathon across bridges SUE ZO PER I PONTI</li> <li>* gondoliers' REGATTA STORICA</li> </ul>
12. Vienna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*New Year's Eve concert at Vienna Opera</li> <li>* Vienna Musical Summer</li> <li>* Modern Music Festival</li> <li>* ball at Vienna Opera</li> </ul>
13. Strasbourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* music festival</li> </ul>

Source: Own work.

bicycle race ending in Paris, the tennis competitions on Wimbledon in London, the Modern Music Festival in Vienna, or Venice's film festival).

### 1.3. Historic cities as venues of scientific conferences

Historic cities are places where international scientific congresses and exhibitions are very often organised (Table 2). Although these events are held all the year round, there is a pronounced seasonality in the organisation of congresses. In the south of Europe (Bologna, Rome, Venice, Vienna) they are held in spring, while in the northern cities (Amsterdam, Antwerp, Strasbourg) mainly in August. The only cities where meetings and conferences are organised all the year round are Paris and London (cf. Jałowicki 1999).

Table 2

## Cities organising international congresses in 1990

Rank		City	Number of events	% of events in country
in Europe	in world			
1	1	Paris	361	48
2	2	London	268	37
3	3	Brussels	194	64
4	4	Vienna	177	81
5	5	Geneva	166	52
6	6	Berlin	166	33
7	7	Madrid	151	51
8	9	Amsterdam	108	28
9	11	Strasbourg	100	13
10	12	Rome	91	27
11	14	Copenhagen	85	48
12	15	The Hague	83	22
13	17	Stockholm	80	50
14	19	Barcelona	70	24
15	20	Budapest	69	69
16	22	Helsinki	67	40
17	29	Oslo	50	50
18	30	Prague	46	50

Source: Jałowiecki (1999).

#### 1.4. Historic cities as venues of political meetings

Historic cities, which need not be great world metropolises, are often chosen as venues of political meetings. Their cultural heritage, past, and peace have a beneficial effect on negotiations. Thanks to architectural monuments that witnessed historic events, they are appreciated also today as places of important political talks.

#### 1.5. Historic cities as locations of managing boards of large supranational firms

Out of about 3,000 branches of foreign enterprises located in Western Europe, their largest numbers can be found in Paris (193), Barcelona (114)

and London (110) (cf. Jałowiecki 1999). Divisions and branches of international corporations located in historic cities give a new, distinctly commercial orientation to their development pattern today. It is geared to cater for a rich visitor who comes on business, but is also interested in exclusive hotels and restaurants, elegant shops, entertainment and cultural institutions (Parysek 1995). That is why many historic cities decide on urban renewal and redevelopment of their downtown districts, giving architectural monuments new functions of hotels, restaurants, clubs, cultural-scientific institutions, etc. In historic cities many old buildings house the headquarters of international firms. Less valuable monuments are turned into shopping and service centres, places of fashion shows, specialised administrative and financial services, exhibitions, catering, and tourist service (Barcelona, Antwerp, Amsterdam). In place of the demolished old, substandard housing stock, big modern shopping or cultural centres are erected (e.g., the Forum des Halles or the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris).

### **1.6. Historic cities as attractive residential places**

If historic monuments are in good repair and the technical and social infrastructure is well developed, old buildings are attractive to dwell in. Under a rehabilitation programme, the buildings are restored and rebuilt suitably. Flats in them are usually very expensive and can only be afforded by really rich people. Nevertheless, the location of the flats in the city centre as well as the historic and cultural value of the monuments making up the city's *milieu* are a major factor attracting to historic cities many persons who wish to live in them, and many firms which want to have their agencies or boards there.

It is important to see to it that architectural relics are not used solely by institutions today (e.g., finance, administration, trade and services), because this may lead to the depopulation of city centres and historic complexes after office hours, that is, to making them lifeless.

## **2. Metropolitan Functions of Historic Cities**

When analysing the classifications of European metropolises carried out by such authors as Jałowiecki (1999), Kukliński (2000) and Parysek (2000), it should be noted that one of the criteria employed is the status of a historic city and the resulting cultural-political attractiveness (Table 3).

Table 3

Historic cities in the classification of European metropolises according to Jałowiecki (1999) (J) and Parysek (2000) (P)

Category of metropolis	Metropolises according to Jałowiecki	Metropolises according to Parysek
World	LONDON, PARIS	LONDON, PARIS
European (J) / continental (P)	Brussels, Geneva, Frankfurt, AMSTERDAM, Milan, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Munich, Zurich, STRASBOURG, VIENNA	Brussels, ROME Milan, Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, VIENNA, Madrid, AMSTERDAM (Randstad), Copenhagen
International (J) / subcontinental (P)	Basel, Hanover, COLOGNE -BONN, Luxembourg, Lyon, Rotterdam, Stuttgart, ANTWERP, Berlin, Madrid, BARCELONA, Copenhagen, The Hague, ROME, BOLOGNA, FLORENCE, Naples, Stockholm	Lisbon, BARCELONA, Seville, COLOGNE, Düsseldorf, Rotterdam, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse, Nice, Glasgow, Manchester, Naples, Turin, Geneva, STRASBOURG, Zurich, Stockholm, Oslo, Warsaw, PRAGUE, BUDAPEST, Helsinki
Regional with predominantly national functions (J)/national (P)	Edinburgh, Marseille, Athens, Helsinki, Lisbon, PRAGUE, BUDAPEST, Genoa, Glasgow, Lille, Turin, VENICE, Warsaw, Belfast, Oslo, Montpellier, Nancy-Metz, Grenoble, Toulouse, Bristol, Manchester, Salzburg, Nice, Thessaloniki, Valencia, Seville, Cracow, Bratislava	Genoa, BOLOGNA, VENICE, Innsbruck, Lille, Grenoble, Montpellier, Bristol, Leeds, Edinburgh, The Hague, ANTWERP, Liège, Thessaloniki, Hanover, Stuttgart, Nürnberg, Basel, Valencia, Luxembourg, Tri-City (Gdańsk-Sopot-Gdynia)

PRAGUE – historic city

Source: Own tabulation on the basis of Jałowiecki (1999) and Parysek (2000).

The lists of cities considered historic are very long and embrace large metropolises and small towns alike (cf. "Zabytkowe miasta Europy", 1998). The highest-ranking historic cities of Europe include the following: Amsterdam, Antwerp, Barcelona, Bologna, Budapest, Cologne, Florence, London, Paris, Prague, Rome, Strasbourg, Venice and Vienna. As can be seen from Table 3, not every metropolis is a historic city, and not every historic city is a metropolis.

### 3. Functions of Historic Cities and Economic Benefits for the Cities and their Residents

Any form of activity in a city is beneficial to its economic entities, authorities and residents. The benefits are diverse, and their magnitude depends primarily on the scale of the city's activity and its size. The introduction of new elements into the city layout and the attraction of people from outside also involves costs, but with good organisation and efficient management the benefits can far exceed the expenses.

Figure 2 presents the advantages resulting from the perception of a city's *milieu*. They include: (1) new jobs, (2) urban renewal and redevelopment, (3) the development of tourist infrastructure, (4) visitors and the money they leave in the city, and (5) rich residents.

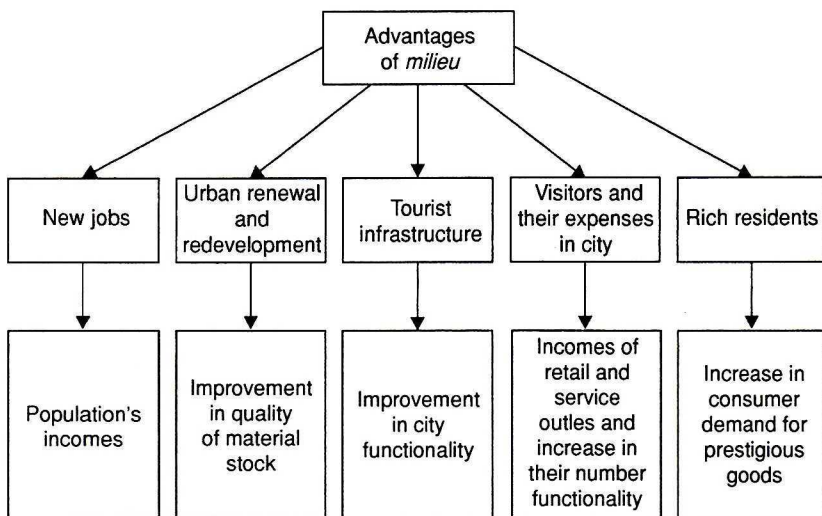


Fig. 2. Advantages of *milieu*

Source: Own work.

The creation of new jobs is a well-known counter-measure against unemployment while contributing to an increase in the population's incomes.

It is common knowledge that cities specialising in tourist functions live off visitors from outside (e.g. Venice). Concern for historical relics puts in motion the process of renewal, which is greatly advantageous to the operation and development of a city.

The ever-growing number of visitors calls for the development of new tourist infrastructure, which also adds to a city's economic potential and its material stock.

Visitors make transactions involved in their stay in a city. They pay for hotels, entrance to various institutions, city transport, meals, souvenirs, attendance at cultural, sports or amusement events, and in this way add to the incomes of service establishments and the municipal budget.

#### **4. Attractiveness of Polish Historic Cities**

By the UNESCO classification, Poland occupies the 9<sup>th</sup> position on the list of states with World Heritage sites. Big Polish cities like Warsaw, Cracow, Gdańsk, Wrocław, Poznań and Toruń have historical monuments of European or even world-wide importance. They are cities whose authorities seem to know how to promote them and how to make them attractive to visitors and business people. The factor limiting investment is the always-too-small amount money that could be spent on development and promotion. With their historical monuments and the existing infrastructure, they can perform all those functions that European historic cities do.

Naturally, not all Polish historic town use their heritage for development. Among them are Zamość, Łańcut, Stary Sącz, Tarnów, Przemyśl, Pułtusk, Cieszyn, Sandomierz, Kazimierz Dolny, and others that boast magnificent Gothic cathedrals, Renaissance layout and architectural relics added to UNESCO's World Heritage List or designated international monuments. They have great growth potential, great in relation to their size, that can be used to good advantage. But first the atmosphere in those towns must change to encourage visitors to come and stay in them, rather than do the opposite.

#### **5. Conclusion**

There are many studies proving that the investment attractiveness of cities is determined not only by their size, level of economic development, or degree of industrialisation, but also by their historic and cultural value. This value creates a *milieu* that is considered today one of the most significant factors of location of economic activity and development (Fig. 3).

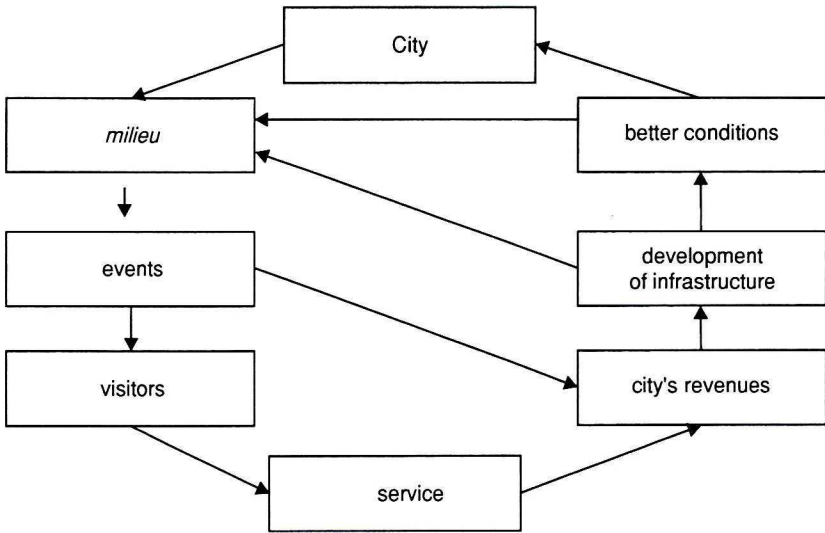


Fig. 3. Development 'loop' of a historic city accommodating its various functions  
Source: own work.

Directing a city's activity towards the service of tourist traffic and the organisation of conferences, exhibitions, festivals, concerts, etc., can bring tangible economic benefits, while media-covered events contribute to their popularity. Owing to the recognition of Cracow as a 'cultural capital of Europe of the year 2000', and efforts by Zakopane to be nominated as the venue of the winter Olympic Games, these towns have become known in the world. This is important, because the necessary funds for the upkeep and restoration of the cultural heritage can only be obtained through publicising the indisputable attractions of these towns.

The historical material heritage should be carefully preserved and saved for future generations. Irrespective of the outlays a historic city obtains from the state or local government, society at large should be aware of the advantages which such a city and its promotion offers. Brought to prominence and carefully kept, monuments of architecture and their specific functions can become not only the symbol of a city, but also a crucial factor of its development.

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