

JAK CHCIAŁBYŚ PODRÓŻOWAĆ POCIĄGIEM Z KRAKOWA DO WIEDNIA W 1860 ROKU?¹

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***Streszczenie.** Artykuł jest poświęcony podróżowaniu koleją z Krakowa do Wiednia w drugiej połowie XIX wieku. Omówione są w nim warunki podróżowania. Autorzy charakteryzują parametry obiektywne i subiektywne oceny jakości podróżowania pociągiem w XIX wieku, a także omawiają kryteria oceny: bezpieczeństwo, jazdę, komfort, estetykę, szacunek do pasażera, relacje społeczne, koszty – w kontekście ograniczonej literatury dotyczącej opinii ówczesnych pasażerów na temat jakości podróży. W artykule omówione są różnice podróżowania w różnych klasach pociągów. W podsumowaniu stwierdzono, że podróż pociągami w drugiej połowie XIX wieku była wolna w porównaniu do dzisiejszych realiów. Pomimo tego czynnikiem obniżającym komfort podróży była obawa przed dużą prędkością pociągu i ryzykiem związanym z silnikiem parowym. Pomimo ryzyka i niedogodności oraz opóźnień pociągów, podróżowanie koleją z Wiednia do Krakowa i odwrotnie było znacznie korzystniejsze niż powozem.*

Introduction: Two cultural and economic centres

In 1846 the city of Krakow and the province around it were annexed by Austria under the name Grand Duchy of Krakow (Wielkie Księstwo Krakowskie or Großherzogtum Krakau²). Krakow became a centre of culture and art (Polskie Ateny³) and a centre of trade of the goods from the surrounding, mainly of agricultural nature. Thus, as usual between two economic and cultural centres, a demand for transport facilities – both for goods and persons – developed.

A train connection is established

In 1836 a licence had been issued to connect Vienna, Ostrava and Krakow, but that railway was only built from Vienna to Bohumín on the – at that time – Austrian and Prussian border⁴. Until 1856, rail communication from Vienna to Krakow used Prussian rails in Upper Silesia, later the whole train tour was within the limits of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as long as the Grand Duchy of

1 Wkład autorów w publikację: Risser R. 50%, Chaloupka C. 50%

2 https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wielkie_Księstwo_Krakowskie

3 <http://www.historycy.org/index.php?showtopic=76543>

4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_rail_transport_in_Poland

Krakow was the part of this Monarchy. Vienna, the centre of the monarchy at that time, and Krakow, the cultural and trade centre of this Grand Duchy were connected by this train.

How could we assess the quality of a train journey at that time?

To answer this question the criteria for the quality of a journey have to be discussed and defined as well as possible. Why this cautious formulation “as well as possible”? The answer is that quality of a trip is arguably subject to a certain (a large?) degree of subjective assessment (Risser 2004).

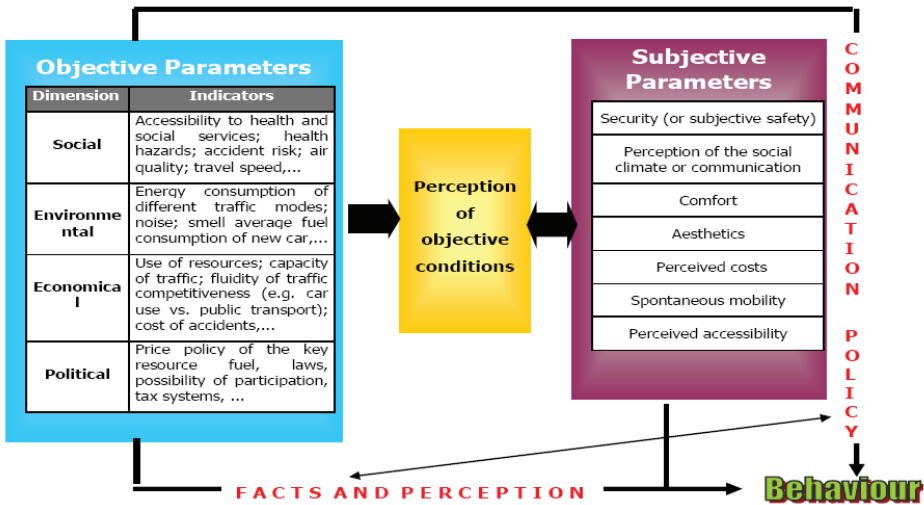


Figure 1. Relation between objective and subjective parameters
 Source: Risser 2004

How did travellers perceive that trip? Of course, there cannot be any exact evaluation of how traveller would assess that trip at that time in the 19th century. But we can have a look on what is mentioned in reports, letters etc. that deal with such a trip. And in order to construct a connection to today’s mobility research, we could try to find out how such a train trip was experienced with respect to the criteria concerning passenger needs that today’s researchers consider relevant.

Criteria for the quality of a journey

For an EU-Project – WALCYNG - Hakamies-Blomqvist and Jutila (1996) summarised literature that dealt with the question what aspects play an important role when we assess the quality of a trip. According to these authors the criteria would be the following:

- Safety: This refers both to the safety of the trip (risk of an accident low?) and the safety from criminal infringements (thefts and robberies).

- Flow/progress: We prefer a smooth flow, stops and goes are not appreciated, speed is not as important as a continuous progress without disturbances.
- Comfort: The quality of any trip depends much on whether we perceive it as agreeable for body and soul with respect to seats, temperature, facilities like buffet, toilets etc.
- Aesthetics: Do we like what we see (the interior, the surroundings), what we hear (agreeable sounds?), what we (do not) smell?
- Equity/respect: Are we treated with due respect in the course of our journey? In the train, this would refer to the train staff viz. to those who are professionally connected to the trip.
- Social climate: How is the contact with other passengers, is there communication, considerateness, politeness, etc.
- Costs: This refers to the financial costs as well as to the time “costs”. Both types of costs have subjective connotations. The assessment of financial costs depends on one’s income and one’s life style. One’s life style is also influential for the assessment of time costs, but so are the other criteria listed above: Travel time will be experienced as short(er) if all the other assessments above are of positive character.

In the following we will provide some glimpses of how passengers – in our case mostly writers and other influential personalities – assessed travelling by train with respect to the above listed and defined criteria. We could not refer to a larger degree to the specific connection between Krakow and Vienna, there, because there is not much literature concerning travelling on that special line. Instead, we collected information concerning railway travelling at different places in Europe, and even some documents from the US and Canada were included. One may assume that in this way, nevertheless, we get an idea of how travelling by train during the 19th century was perceived, and this idea is probably also valid for the route Vienna – Krakow.

Safety

Was it safe to travel by train at that time and how was safety assessed? Were train accidents frequent and did passengers realise that there would be safety risks in this respect? Were thefts and robberies known of and how did passengers assess risks as far as these criminal infringements are concerned?

Newspaper articles and citations from authors indicate that there was some fear that one would be harassed or robbed. Especially women seemed to be afraid. It is impossible to know, today, if there really was a high risk for women who travelled alone. In any case, what we can find is that people thought there might be a risk. At the same time, fears were not confined to women. Everybody could be subject to theft, robbery, threatening of one’s physical safety, or to generally ruthless behaviour of other travellers, regardless of gender⁵.

5 https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/22lne2/how_would_a_young_woman_travel_alone_by_train_in/

There were other fears as well, that were connected to the transport mode itself: Especially in the early years of travelling by train many people were afraid of the “high speed” of the trains and, not independently of this, of going off the track. As we know, quite a few accidents did happen, so this fear was kind of realistic. In general, early passenger trains (before 1850), especially during the railroad industry’s early years, were relatively dangerous. While steam allowed for faster, and a more efficient means of transportation, this did not necessarily translate into a safer way of travel. The first railroad companies used mostly trial and error in learning what worked and what did not which, unfortunately, sometimes resulted in injuries or deaths. To make matters worse, shoddy construction practices and lack of government oversight, as railroads raced to build new rail lines and rapidly expand their networks, caused numerous deaths and injuries in the 19th century. For instance, early railroad roadbed practices involved using simple large stones to support the track structure, which quickly sank into the soil. This caused tracks to go out of alignment causing derailments. Also, the early rail designs of iron strap rails on wooden track caused deadly “snake heads” when they worked loose, disintegrating the wooden floors of passenger cars, sometimes killing the occupants inside⁶.

The documentation concerning railway accidents shown in footnote (7) is from the US and Canada, but one can see that even in Europe railway accidents happened yearly, and often more than one per year⁸.

What is interesting from a psychological point of view is the perception of having no control. The locus of control, i.e. the degree to which people believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives, as opposed to external forces beyond their control (Rotter 1966) is important with respect to how we perceive any situation where we are involved: When we have control – like when we drive a car – we usually feel ok, except when we learn how to drive or when we are not fit (e.g. due to illness). When we do not have (full) control, e.g. when we are a passenger, we obviously perceive situations as potentially threatening because we cannot take corrective action when something goes wrong. (Soccer-trainers tell about this situation, when they stand at the margin of the soccer field but cannot treat the ball “in the correct way” themselves). This is probably one important reason why driving a car is for many more attractive than going by train: In the latter situation one has less control. This lack of control was talked and written about explicitly during the early years of travelling by train, while travelling by train at that time was of course not compared to going by car, but to walking or going by coach. In coaches, one did not have full control either, but one could at least communicate with the coachman and ask to proceed more slowly or more cautiously. Moreover, coaches were much slower than trains in the 1860es.

“Seated in the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity...the vital experienced of the glad animal sensibilities made

6 <http://www.american-rails.com/early-passenger-trains.html>

7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:19th-century_railway_accidents

8 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_schwerer_Unf%C3%A4lle_im_Schienenverkehr

doubts impossible on the question of speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not a product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest among brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles and thunder beating hoofs” (de Quincey, 1849⁹).

Flow/progress

How did people perceive the flow of the trip? Was it smooth or were there many interruptions? Were there longer waiting times when there was no movement at all?

We could not find any complaints about the low speed during the journey. On the contrary, some authors wrote that moving from A to B would now go too fast in the sense that we would not perceive the change of environment any more: We „lose the space and only time remains“, as the German author Heinrich Heine would put it. Time passes without us feeling the changing space, and suddenly we are there¹⁰.

One disturbance of the “smooth flow” was connected to the character of the absolute monarchy: Police wanted to have control of all movements of the people, and the train caused difficulties in this respect, as spokesman of the police complained. At certain times, travellers had to register up to one day before the trip and to apply for an allowance to travel¹¹.

Another type of disturbance of flow (that of course also reduced comfort, see below) was the frequent lack of punctuality. This could lead to protests of passengers of such an intensity that police had to intervene (e.g. Sachslehner 2014). In his comedy “Eisenbahnheirathen” (Railway marriages) from 1844 Johann Nestroy wrote: „*Die Sechzehn Stationen bis Neustadt fabrt man in drey Viertelstund; ,s Anhalten dauert in allem zusamm höchstens anderthalb Stund – ab so eine Reis ist wirklich ein Genuß*“ (I. Act, 2. Scene). This means: To travel the 16 stations until Neustadt takes three quarters of an hour, the stops take a maximum of one and a half hours – such a trip is pure pleasure.

Comfort

This includes all questions about, e.g., seats, cabin equipment? Space? Assistance with luggage? Easy storage of luggage? Supply of food and drinks? Toilets? Opportunity to rise and move every now and then? Is one protected from the sun on the one hand, and is the temperature agreeable, on the other hand. Is there abrupt braking?

When talking about the comfort in an ergonomic sense – the quality of seats, the space provided, the facilities in the waggons – we certainly have to make a dif-

9 https://books.google.at/books?id=dXaJIMJLfSsC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&redir_esc=y&hl=de#v=onepage&q&f=false

10 https://www.weser-kurier.de/bremen_artikel,-Wie-die-Eisenbahn-das-Reisen-veraenderte-_arid,871497.html

11 <http://www.habsburger.net/de/kapitel/kaiserliche-hoheiten-als-namenspatrone-die-eisenbahn-schafft-neue-bewegungsraeume>

ference between different social classes of citizens. We may assume that for the upper class everything was provided that was considered appropriate for the status of important people; nice seats, tables, food and service, assistance with the luggage, etc. The drawing below¹² gives an impression of the quality of a trip in a waggon dedicated to the upper class (fig. 2).



Figure 2. A first class compartment in a train in the 19th century

Source: see footnote 11

One can be sure, though, that less affluent people and even the middle class found much poorer conditions when travelling by train. The quality of seating could certainly be looked at sceptically. Moreover, there was much less space for the passengers and their luggage. The drawings that we see on the next page (figures 3 and 4) give the impression of a “mess”.

The drawing above shows a compartment the interior of which does not look too bad. However, one can also see that the space for luggage is ridiculously little and that many people are stuffed into this department. In the next drawing the situation is not much different (Does this remind anybody of the situation on cheap flights?).

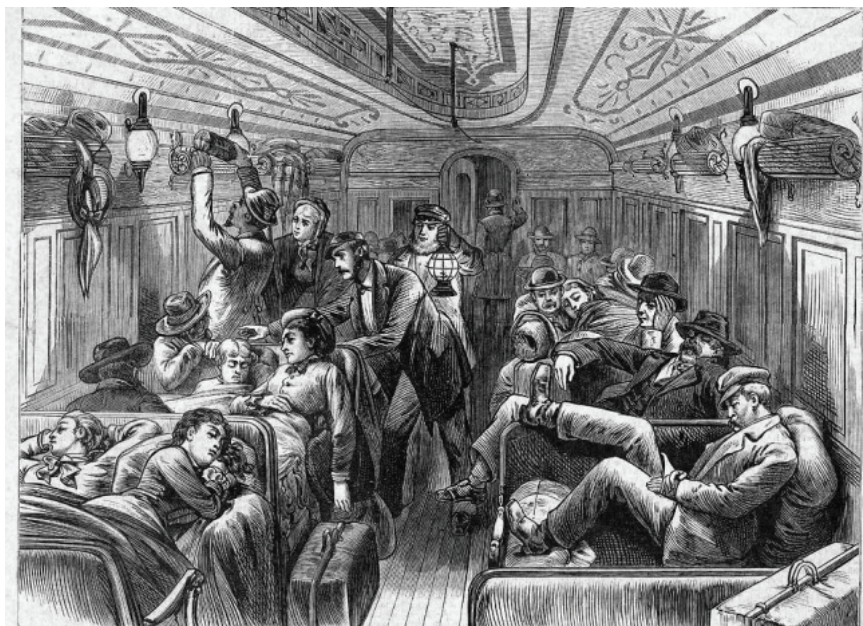
¹² https://www.google.at/search?q=travelling+by+train+in+the+19th+century&client=firefox-b&dcr=0&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewj0voquyucrWAhUHKpoKHeWJC_wQsAQIJQ&biw=1920&bih=971



a588 www.fotosearch.com

Figure 3. *Compartment for less affluent citizens*

Source: see footnote 11



THE DISCOMFORTS OF TRAVEL.—WEARY PASSENGERS SETTLING FOR THE NIGHT.

Figure 4. *This drawing shows, among other things, how little space for luggage was provided*

Source: see footnote 11

As one can see there was a certain disorder in the train which might be attributed to the life-style of the poorer people at that time. But of course, one can also see that there, e.g., was not sufficient space for luggage, and that the seating facilities were arguably poor. People made the situation as comfortable as possible for themselves.

One problem of comfort that existed for all groups, independently of their social status, was the height of the stairs, or rather ladders, that one had to use when entering the waggons (Roth 1926, referring to train trips in the 20s of the 20th century, while one may assume that the situation was worse in the 60s of the 19th century which we speak about here).

Probably one should also discuss the question whether toilets in the trains were agreeable places. Of course, this is subject to what people are used to. Maybe people did not expect much quality concerning this point, or maybe it was not usual to talk about this topic: In any case we could not find any comments in our documents that would refer to toilets; only, how difficult it was to get there, out of the narrow seats where there hardly was space for one's knees (Roth 1926).

Aesthetics

Interior aspects like design, colours, cleanliness and external aspects like landscape (that cannot be changed, but can be seen if the windows are well placed and big enough) are important for the eye. Is the noise level well acceptable or is there disturbing noise? What "odours" prevail – from physical sources (e.g. steam engine) or from persons or animals? As one can understand, comfort and aesthetics are quite closely interrelated.

One could see in the drawings above that visual aesthetics played a certain role in the design of the wagons, although the functionality was not good, as was said above: Passengers were stuffed together and there was little space for luggage. Other aesthetic experiences when travelling would be disturbances by the noises and the smell being caused by other passengers. Regulations for passengers – e.g. the German regulations issued in 1909 – show that problems in this respect had in fact become obvious in the past, which made the issuing of these regulations necessary¹³. Among other things, the transport of evil-smelling substances and items is forbidden, there. Marlene Klaus¹⁴ writes: „Locomotives emitting steam and sparks, uncomfortable wooden benches, narrow cabins, fleas and other bugs probably were a daily occurrence”, a sentence which could as well be placed under the headline above: comfort.

Concerning the aesthetics of beautiful landscapes there are different views represented in comments of passengers (or people who never went by train but would imagine how a train trip would feel): Partly, as already mentioned, the fear

13 https://books.google.at/books?id=xbDwBgAAQBAJ&pg=PA8&lpg=PA8&dq=%C3%BCbelriechende+Mitreisende+in+der+Eisenbahn&source=bl&ots=YhnB-PXV_h&sig=ifpfo_cFULzxxRY59fMAUv5GE-vs&hl=de&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiQm_i0wNHWAhXMHpoKHTRkAoQQ6AEIOTAD#v=onepage&q=%C3%BCbelriechende%20Mitreisende%20in%20der%20Eisenbahn&f=false

14 <https://www.bakerstreetbibliothek.de/reisen-im-19-jahrhundert-von-marlene-klaus/>

was expressed that one would not perceive any details of the landscape any more. The “perceived geography” would change (Schivelbusch 2000). But in contrast to this, some would say that one now could in fact perceive more landscape, however, with a different perspective. The journalist Jules Clarétie expressed his point of view that one from now on could see all of France in just a few hours (in Osterhammel 2012).

Equity/respect

Conductor, police, custom’s officers: How do they treat you, is communication acceptably symmetric (i.e. among equals) and polite? Is one feeling respected? Does one get information and other types of assistance?

Trips start with the purchase of a ticket and there again we have a quotation by Roth (1926), who complains that one had to bow deeply and look through an iron grid in order to be able to speak with the man who sells the tickets. He also mentions the “loud” customs’ officers and the conductor whose only function was to “punch a hole in a piece of paper”. The latter are no real problems of “lack of equity”, though, but rather they are described as a disturbance of comfort. Russian literature of 19th century, on the other hand, tells about some kind of hierarchical order not only within different workers’ groups at the railways but also when showing power (as a representative of the railway agency) and personal importance. Especially station masters, according to Dostoevsky in his “Diary of the year 1876”, seemed to misapply their competences. They have been called “dictators” of a station. We sense that there was an equity problem, there, especially as far as poorer groups of people are concerned.

The paintings below may also give a kind of information about the relevance and attention the rail enterprises paid to different classes of society. These engravings are taken from the Illustrated London News, 22nd May 1847. They show first, second and third class passengers travelling to Epsom races¹⁵ (figures 5, 6 and 7).



Figure 5. 1st class

15 <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/victorianbritain/happy/source1.htm>



Figure 6. 2nd class



Figure 7. 3rd class

Many differences can be seen between the railway carriages that the different classes of passengers used in England at that time. One can easily imagine why there are no more third class' carriages on trains today.

Social climate

The aspects that constitute this dimension are narrowly related to aspects of equity: What types of passengers is one surrounded by? Is there communication with those other passengers and is this communication friendly and supportive? Is there drinking of spirits, loud laughter, shouting? Are there many children around and how is typical child behaviour perceived?

From what one can read in some documents the suspicion could arise that many travellers experience too much contact with other passengers in the trains. In the coaches, the number of passengers was limited and the trips were longer, without a possibility "to escape". One had the chance to get to know one another

without much coming and going all the time. In the trains there were many passengers in a shorter time and coming in contact with so many others was perceived as a bit awkward by many.

Schivelbusch (2000) stated that there happened to be some kind of “blind date”. When analysing the order of sitting in a carriage of the first or second class according to the author, travellers found themselves in relations to others they otherwise would never have been in so close contact with. This would be “an embarrassing constraint”. Thus, the habit of reading established, which allowed one to hide behind a book¹⁶. However, travelling by train and reading on the train soon became an attractive leisure-time activity for some other passengers. The “remainders” are there today: There are bookstores at most of the train stations in the world, nowadays.

One main point when talking about social climate refers to the different classes of travellers: see also figures 5, 6 and 7 and consider that in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for instance there were 4 service classes with huge differences concerning trip-quality¹⁷. Waggons of the 3rd class had no windows and those of the 4th class had no roof (precisely as in figure 7).

Costs

Not only finance aspects are referred to when we talk about costs, but also time costs and energy costs (efforts one has to make). The latter point need not be discussed here as the texts referring to comfort and aesthetics give a good impression of the hardships many people had to undergo when travelling by train in the 19th century.

Financial costs were certainly perceived differently by persons belonging to different social layers, depending on income and on their “style of spending money”, viz. their life style. Moreover, what one can afford influences of course some of the criteria above, like e.g. the feeling of comfort. We did not get a clear picture there but one may assume that especially poor people found travelling expensive, although it had become much cheaper when compared to the costs of coaches (Conrad & Osterhammel 2011). Thus, many more people than before had the opportunity to travel longer distances the more the railways developed.

Time “costs” are both a function of habits and of all the other criteria discussed above. For instance, if the feeling of comfort is low, travel times will be assessed as feeling much longer than when agreeable comfort is given. However, from what could be understood from the documents found, low speed was not a problem at that time, rather on the contrary, while long stops were commented on. Waiting times, e.g. because of problems with the steam engine, were not reacted to in a friendly way at all (Zoreva 2012). The text above under the headline “flow” reflects this point as well.

16 https://www.weser-kurier.de/bremen_artikel,-Wie-die-Eisenbahn-das-Reisen-veraenderte-_arid,871497.html

17 <https://austria-forum.org/af/AEIOU/Eisenbahn>

Conclusion: How was your trip?

The trip was certainly a slow trip when comparing it to today's conditions. Still, there were many passengers on the train who perceived the speed as uncomfortably high. They were not used to the speeds we are exposed to nowadays. Regardless of this fear of the "high speed" of the trains, going by train increased their possibility to travel and so they could make this trip to Krakow from Vienna and thus get to know different regions¹⁸. The flow was disturbed in many different ways, before the trip – e.g., they had to get an allowance – and during the trip: problems with the steam engine etc. on the way. Comfort was good for those fellow passengers travelling first class, constantly diminishing from the second class on, with an increasing amount of aesthetic disturbances (noise, smell, disorder) – although the troubles due to smoke and soot were there for all passengers. Some passengers acknowledged that the trip provided some comfortable time for reading – if there were not too many passengers packed into the compartment. Concerning equity and the social climate, the cheaper the service class, the worse people were treated, as we could observe, and the more frictions there were between travellers, not least due to the lack of space. The trip was expensive, it took long time and one had to undergo some hardships. Still, compared to using the coach from Vienna to Krakow, or vice versa, going by train was a huge improvement.

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