Measuring the Livability of Shakespeare's London

Abstract

Using a modified version of the currently used Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Report, I will measure the livability of London during the lifetime of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), using both qualitative and quantitative historical data, and reaching a final quantitative measure of livability. I will measure five broad criteria categories: stability, healthcare, culture/environment, education, and infrastructure. I will eliminate criteria based on their anachronisms with the period; thus, criteria such as public healthcare, level of corruption, public education indicators, telecommunications, international links, and energy provisions must be eliminated or reconfigured, as they did not exist in early modern London as they do now. In keeping with the view that this report should be measured by the standards of the time, not by modern ones, views on the value of child labor and other such contemporarily illegal acts will be judged based on the historical context. Reflecting the number of sub-criteria, stability will constitute 25% of London's livability, healthcare 15%, culture/environment 35%, education 10%, and infrastructure 15% of the overall livability score. Scores will be broken down into 20 point increments, with scores of 80-100 points reflecting ideal livability, and scores of 50 or less will reflect severely restricted living.

Method

Stability (25%)- 15
Petty Crime- 2 Undesirable
Violent Crime- 3 Uncomfortable
Military Conflict- 5 Acceptable
Civil Unrest- 3 Uncomfortable
Threat of Terrorism- 2 Undesirable
Healthcare (23%)- 14
Availability of Private Healthcare- 5 Acceptable
Quality of Private Healthcare- 4 Tolerable
Availability of Over the Counter Drugs- 5 Acceptable
Culture/Environment (22%)- 23
Temperature/Humidity- 3 Uncomfortable
Job Quality and Availability- 3 Uncomfortable
Religious Restrictions- 2 Undesirable
Censorship- 4 Tolerable
Sanitation- 2 Undesirable
Culture- 5 Acceptable
Food- 4 Tolerable
Education (10%)- 3
Availability of Education- 1 Intolerable
Quality of Education- 2 Undesirable
Infrastructure (20%)- 10
Quality of Road Network- 2 Undesirable
Housing Quality- 3 Uncomfortable
Water Provision- 5 Acceptable

Category 1: Stability (weight: 25% of total)

Indicator	Source
Prevalence of petty crime	EIU rating
Prevalence of violent crime	EIU rating
Threat of terror	EIU rating
Threat of military conflict	EIU rating
Threat of civil unrest / conflict	EIU rating

Category 2: Healthcare (weight: 20% of total)

Indicator	Source
Availability of private healthcare	EIU rating
Quality of private healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of public healthcare	EIU rating
Quality of public healthcare	EIU rating
Availability of over-the-counter drugs	EIU rating
General healthcare indicators	Adapted from World Bank

Category 3: Culture & Environment (weight: 25% of total)

Indicator	Source
Humidity / Temperature rating	Adapted from average weather conditions
Discomfort of climate to travellers	EIU rating
Level of corruption	Adapted from Transparency International
Social or religious restrictions	EIU rating
Level of censorship	EIU rating
Sporting availability	EIU field rating of 3 sport indicators
Cultural availability	EIU field rating of 4 cultural indicators
Food and drink	EIU field rating of 4 cultural indicators
Consumer goods and services	EIU rating of product availability

Category 4: Education (weight: 10% of total)

Indicator	Source
Availability of private education	EIU rating
Quality of public education	EIU rating
Public education indicators	Adapted from World Bank

Category 5: Infrastructure (weight: 20% of total)

Indicator	Source
Quality of road network	EIU rating
Quality of public transport	EIU rating
Quality of international links	EIU rating
Availability of good quality housing	EIU rating
Quality of energy provision	EIU rating
Quality of water provision	EIU rating
Quality of telecommunications	EIU rating

Figure 1. The original livability criteria. Economist Intelligence Unit. "The Global Liveability Report 2017." *The Economist.*
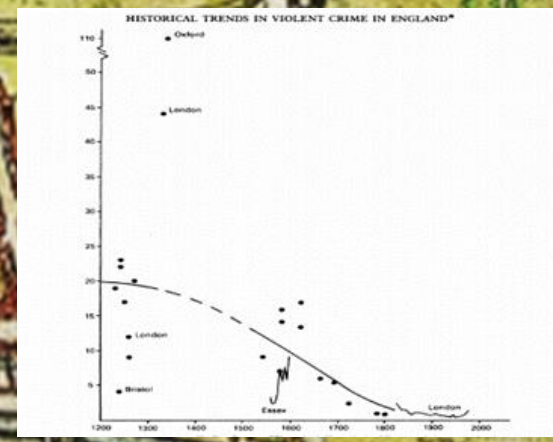
Figure 2. A graph of the violent crimes though years 1200 to 2000 in England. Stone, Lawrence. "Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300-1980." *Past & Present.* 1983.
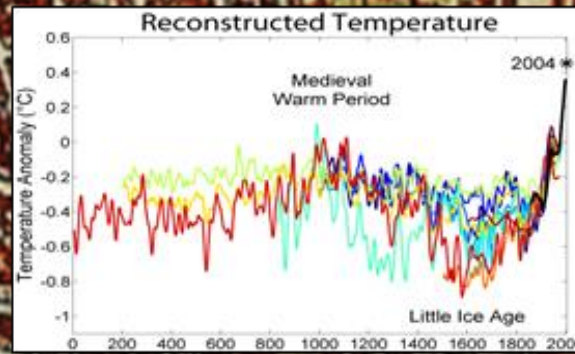
Figure 3. The "Little Ice Age" climate of London. Orange marks London's temperature. Rhode, Robert A. "Reconstructed Temperature." *Global Warming Art.*

Clockwise from top left: Figure 4. The silver pay for unskilled workers; Figure 5. The silver pay for skilled workers; Figure 6. The grain pay for unskilled workers; Figure 7. The grain pay for skilled workers. Broadberry, Stephen, and Gupta, Bishnupriya. "The early modern great divergence: wages, prices and economic development in Europe and Asia, 1500–1800." *The Economic History Review.* 2005.
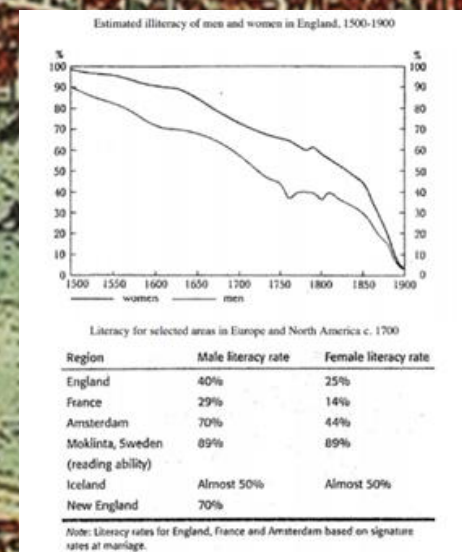
Figure 8. The literacy rates in England, France, Amsterdam, Sweden, Iceland, and New England between 1500 and 1900. Mitch, David. "Education and Skill of the British Labour Force." Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol. I: Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, Cambridge:

Conclusion

With a score of 65, Shakespeare's London, as the Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Report assigns, presents factors that "negative factors have an impact on day-to-day living", and suggests an allowance of 10% to move a worker to a city with this rating (Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Report). While this supports that London would be livable for Shakespeare's contemporaries, but not necessarily ideal, data for the conditions of smaller villages in England were unavailable, so the relative livability of London compared to surrounding areas, and the potential impact such data would have on this research, remains unmeasured.