

Experiences with Using Volunteer Resources in Paratransit in Germany

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Nahverkehrsgesellschaft Baden-Württemberg mbH

Overview

1. Personal / institutional background
2. Public transport in Germany
3. Paratransit experiences in Germany
4. Volunteers in German public transport
 - current situation
5. Issues for the future
 - demographics
 - technology
 - lifestyles
6. Synthesis



Status quo

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Personal background

- ▶ 1991-1998
Graduate studies in transport planning and geography in Berlin and London
- ▶ 1999-2014
Mobility researcher and consultant at TU Berlin and nexus Institute for cooperation management
- ▶ 2007
PhD at TU Berlin
- ▶ Since 2010
Work on community transport (Bürgerbus)
- ▶ Since April 2014 at NVBW
- ▶ Main areas of work and research: public transport, customer care and travel experience, transport policy and strategy, participation and cooperation



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NVBW - Institutional background

- ▶ Established 1994 as result of rail and public transport reform
- ▶ Mobility agency of the state of Baden-Württemberg (10.6 m pop.)
- ▶ Business areas:
 - regional rail transport: Planning, tendering, quality monitoring
 - **local public transport**: Information, coordination, networking, *support* for local authorities
 - walking and cycling
 - public transport marketing (3-Löwen-Takt)
- ▶ Competence centre for innovative public transport in rural areas



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Public transport in Germany - some essential facts

- ▶ an industry of \$ 14 bn annual turnover (fares and usage-based compensation)
- ▶ still (rather) important mode of transport
- ▶ a (moderate) growth industry (at least in urban areas)
- ▶ mix of public and private sector approaches and stakeholders
- ▶ local transport by urban rail, bus (and paratransit): responsibility of cities and provinces
- ▶ tradition of integrated planning and fare systems (Verkehrsverbünde) on region level



Paratransit in Germany

In public transport

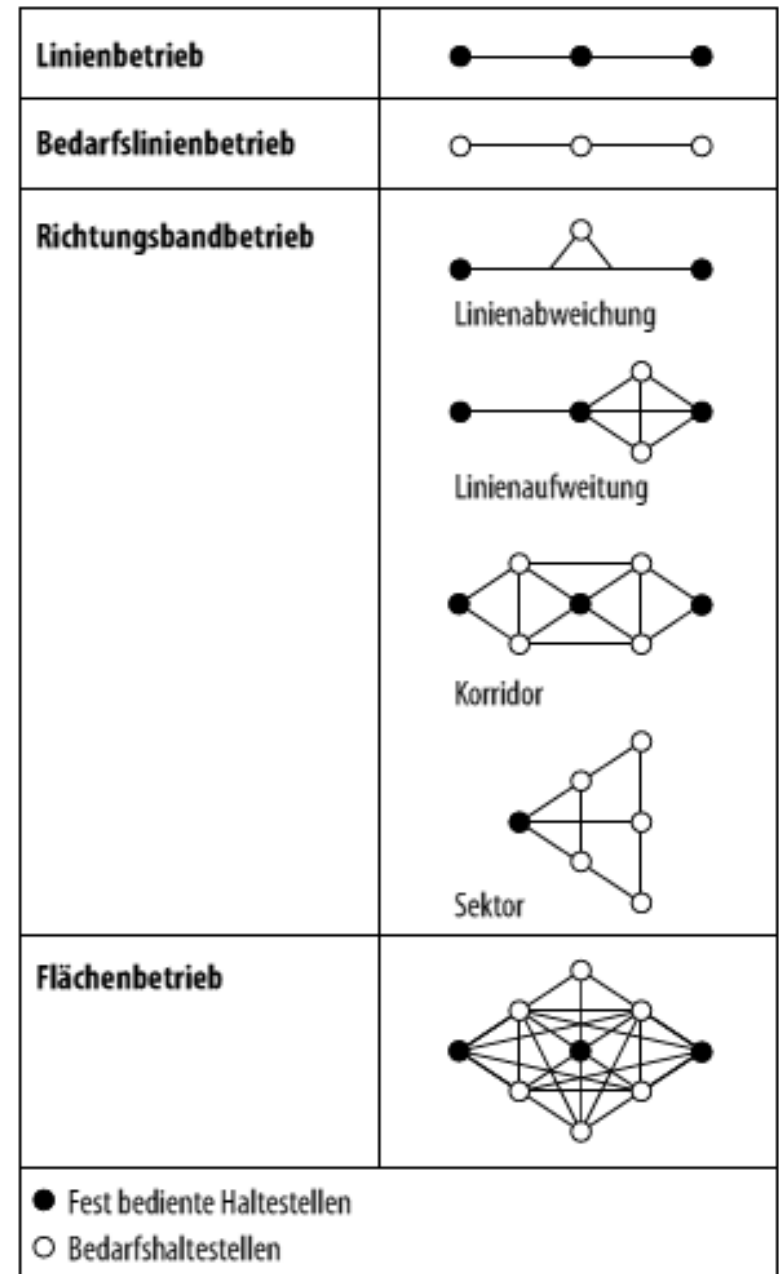
- ▶ known since 1980s
- ▶ different operating concepts and degrees of flexibility
- ▶ complementing “big” public transport in areas and times of low demand
- ▶ operated by taxi/PHV companies as subcontractors to public transport providers

In social and health sectors

- ▶ various types of special needs transport
- ▶ variety of providers: local initiatives, charities, religious institutions, companies...
- ▶ different funding arrangements

... **outside the view of transport industry!**

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Volunteers in German (public) transport (1)

- ▶ **“Bürgerbus” - Citizens drive citizens**
 - voluntary engagement in the local public transport sector
 - use of small buses (car driving license is enough)
 - local organisation as a strength!
- ▶ **State of development**
 - main type of “community transport” (UK) in Germany
 - first service opened in Germany in 1985
 - currently ca. 250 schemes nation-wide
 - growth especially in recent years
 - different levels of public support



Volunteers in German (public) transport (2)

Other (more recent) concepts

- ▶ **Small “Bürgerbus”**
 - passenger car instead of minibus
 - more paratransit-like
- ▶ **Lift-giving with private cars**
 - oriented more to people in need of assistance
 - local initiatives
- ▶ **Special needs transport using volunteers**
- ▶ **Assistance on mainline public transport journeys**



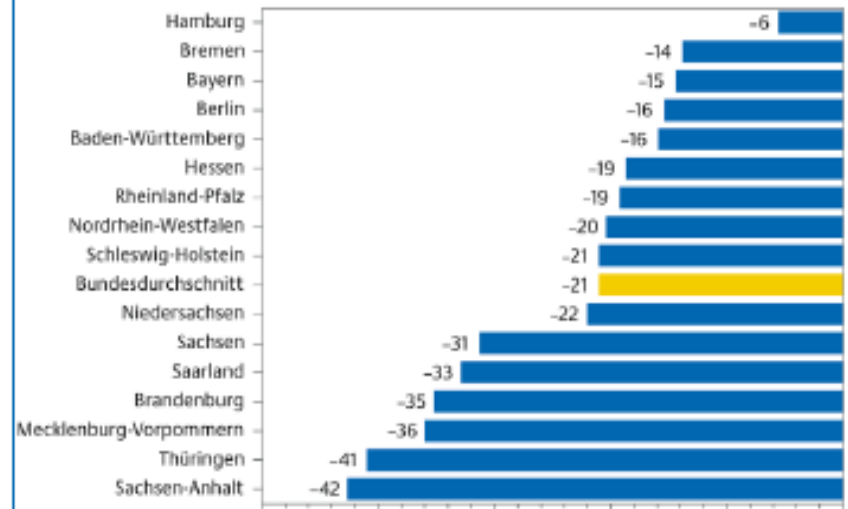
Future developments

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Demographic change - a big challenge, but also an opportunity

- ▶ Germany - a society becoming
 - older
 - smaller
 - and more colourful
- ▶ big regional differences
- ▶ a political taboo starting to be uncovered
- ▶ major challenge for society affecting many service sectors, utilities, businesses and communities (and transport as a facilitator!)

Abbildung 17: Veränderung der Bevölkerungszahl nach Bundesländern, 2060 gegenüber 2010 (in Prozent)



Quelle: Ergebnisse der 12. koordinierten Bevölkerungsvorausberechnung nach Ländern; grafische Darstellung: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (BiB)

Demographic change - implications for (community) transport

- ▶ number of potential volunteers
- ▶ number of potential users
- ▶ land use implications - need to travel
- ▶ re-thinking of work-life arrangements
- ▶ need to use resources efficiently



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Technologies - don't expect miracles!

- ▶ current use of technology in community transport
 - low familiarity (both providers and users)
 - in part done by „main“ transport provider
 - web use growing, but still limited
 - tools for operations and controlling emerging
- ▶ external trends to be considered
 - rising level of computer literacy
 - diffusion of smartphones + „portable“ software
 - diffusion of AAL technology at home (?)
 - changing expectations?

Entfernungstabelle in Minuten

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Bretzenheim | | | | | |
| Dorsheim | 12,0 | | | | |
| Guldental | 7,0 | 13,0 | | | |
| Langenlonsheim | 5,0 | 8,0 | 5,0 | | |
| Laubenheim | 7,0 | 4,0 | 11,0 | 4,0 | |
| Münster-Sarmsheim | 10,0 | 7,0 | 14,0 | 9,0 | 5,0 |
| Rümmelsheim | 14,0 | 3,0 | 14,0 | 11,0 | 7,0 |
| Waldalgesheim | 18,0 | 10,0 | 14,0 | 17,0 | 12,0 |
| Windesheim | 13,0 | 9,0 | 5,0 | 12,0 | 15,0 |
| | Bretzen- heim | Dorsheim | Guldental | Langen- lonsheim | Lauben- heim |

Lifestyles - several big unknowns

- ▶ life-long working?
- ▶ attitudes to volunteering (personal and society level)
- ▶ possibilities for volunteering (restrictions and support)
- ▶ importance of social contact
- ▶ attachment to car
- ▶ level of material wealth



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Synthesis

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Concluding hypotheses

Volunteers in public transport and paratransit ...

- ▶ a continuing and growing need
- ▶ essentially a matter of *social* needs and interests
- ▶ where technology can co-shape and mediate
- ▶ but responding to volunteers' motivations remains crucial!



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Thanks for your
attention!

Questions?

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