The failure of integrated transport policy in Germany: a historical perspective

Abstract:
In order to reach a sustainable traffic development, the European Union follows the central idea of an integrated transport policy. In contrast to the widely accepted concept, the EU recently had to admit that in fact transport development goes in the opposite direction. This contradiction has to be explained. The article describes the long lasting succession of efforts to implement a far-reaching cooperation in the transport sector as is aspired by an integrated transport policy. In each case, though, the political idea of cooperation was superseded by the economic one of competition. Therefore, the author argues in favour of a detailed scientific analysis of the necessary political conditions for an integrated transport policy, instead of continuing an untested concept.

Keywords:
Integrated policy, disintegration, reintegration, cooperation, competition,
The Failure of Integrated Transport Policy in Germany – A Historical Perspective

1. The Current Central Idea of an integrated Transport Policy

Both in science and policy of transport, a strategy of integration has been the concept followed since the 1990s. The central idea of an integrated transport policy that has established itself as a hegemonial discourse is being followed by the EU and on the level of its individual members comprises all sorts of societal protagonists.¹ Disregarding the different interpretations and evaluations of what might be meant by integrated transport policy, three dimensions of this strategy can be distinguished: First, different sectors of transport are to be combined by technical integration. In freight transport for example, the transfer from the road onto rails is to be simplified through technical innovations. In the sector of passenger services, the combination of public and private transport shall be supported electronically. Secondly, the technical integration is to be furthered by a specific and comprehensive political integration. This is based on the consideration that decisions in transport policy effect other political sectors and vice versa. The close interrelation of urban and transport development has caused the closer linking of urban and transport planning in joint committees. Thirdly, besides technical and political integration, the strategy of integrated transport policy aims at social integration. As the development of transport effects society as a whole its various factions with their specific interests are to take part in the process of decision making. By letting economic and environmental associations and the unions contribute to the process, a balance of their respective interests is sought after.

The integrated transport policy claims to unite the three modes of integration in order to contribute to a sustainable transport development. Such a transport policy should

be guided by considerations of economic efficiency and align it with ecological and social standards. All parties hope that the supposedly new model of integrated transport policy may avert the collapse of traffic otherwise to be feared. These high expectations stem from its obviously potent persuasiveness. The insight in the advantages of the synergy-effects through the linking of different transport sectors over today’s mostly independent usage is stressed unanimously. Moreover, a consistent transport concept achieved through political and social integration is preferred to the present situation of manifold socio-political conflicts of interests.

However, hardly any convincing measures taken until this day live up to the strong sparkle of the original idea of an integrated transport policy. In the model’s shadow the present transport policy rather develops along quite conservative lines, orientated towards the individual transport sector’s efforts of optimisation that are inherent in the existing system. At present, one can hardly speak of a sustainable transport policy in the sense of an equal consideration of economic, ecological and social aspects. Reflections in transport policy continue to be dominated by criteria of economic efficiency, and environmental and socio-political measures are only a by-product.

Typical of the present situation of the policy and science of transport is a peculiar contradiction of standards and reality. One might argue that a central idea has to generate a critical number of followers before one can even think of taking practical measures, and that such a process takes time. But the objection to the present model of an integrated transport policy gathers momentum by pointing out the long tradition of revivals of such models without ever realising them. Against the background of this succession of failure of models of integrated transport concepts, the question of their feasibility gains new significance (Hull 2005). At the same time, the analyses of the historic development might reveal why concepts of integrated transport policy have not been realised and possibly provide helpful insights for the assessment of the present situation. The principal thesis to be developed in the following pages maintains that the reasonable idea of an integrated transport policy, based on a planning that takes society as a whole into consideration, has always been undermined by the equally rational idea of a market based on free competition. Since a way to reconcile the respective logic of each system has never been found,

---

2 The present situation in England is described by Grayling (2004). For Germany Hinricher/Schüller (2002).
an integrated transport policy in the above-mentioned sense could hitherto not be successful.

2. The Central Idea of Integrated Transport Policy as an Historic Paradigm

2.1. Transport Policy in the 19th Century – Competition Beats Cooperation

“The entirely nationalised railways completely eliminate the uneconomic effects of competition.”

The examination of the beginnings of modern transport development in Germany in the course of industrialisation and with it the establishment of railroads in the early 19th century reveals a fundamental dilemma in the relationship of modern age and mobility. With the organisation of modern societies being more and more based on the division of labour, the sophistication of social functions increased. As a result, the social protagonists became more and more separated, and this separation could only be overcome by additional means of flexible utilizing transport. This developmental process, spiralling from increasing distances to bridging them, is marked by an interplay of integration and disintegration. “One might phrase it pointedly: transport is what holds the modern world together and drives it apart at the same time” (Rammler 1999: 57, also Rammler 2001).

Accordingly, the problem of integrating the transport system appears in the 19th century already. Even then the technical, political and social aspects had to be considered, the same dimensions we have to deal with today. The permanent interplay of the competition in private industry and the planning for society as a whole, evolving in the wake of the dynamic process of industrialisation, revealed the fundamental contradiction of civil-capitalist socialisation. The railway functioned as a

---

3 Elster (1911: 766).
drawing card for this development and as the core of modern industry. The railway was recognized early on as an instrument for standardizing the economy and politics of the many German states, but the anarchic conditions in this branch of industry were a significant obstacle to that. The permanent interplay of the competition in private industry and the planning for society as a whole, evolving in the wake of the dynamic process of industrialisation, revealed the fundamental contradiction of civil-capitalist socialisation. The railway functioned as a drawing card for this development and as the core of modern industry (Fremdling 1975, Schivelbusch 1977). The railway was recognized early on as an instrument for standardizing the economy and politics of the many German states, but the anarchic conditions in this branch of industry were a significant obstacle to that (Wolf 1992: 76-90).

Motivated by the insight of how necessary a dynamic transport development is for a successful economic development, state subventions were given to support the activities of the private industry on the transport-sector, at first without interventions or political regulations. In this way, a great variety of suppliers appeared on the scene, exclusively led by the criteria of business management when they constructed railways, disregarding aspects of political economy or of society as a whole. Instead, on particularly lucrative sections several parallel tracks were built at once, competing for customers and often differing distinctly in their technical standards. Moreover, this individual economic competition was eclipsed for a long time by the competition of individual countries, then very pronounced in Germany. Consequently, the establishment of a unified railway system was obstructed again and again by the self-interests marked by the countries’ frontiers. “Especially the national Prussian Railway-Administration which had been praised many times as the ‘prime example of a successful public enterprise’ (J. A. Schumpeter) is responsible for routes following purely particularistic interests and look like a foolish act from the point of view of rational transport politics (ibid. 1992: 63). But also within the countries, where individual cities were able to assert themselves against others by promoting transport, leaving other regions behind, the development was inconsistent. Typical for the development were, besides a productive competition, yet again coordination problems, caused by a lack of political regulation (Ziegler 1996). In addition, more and more different economic interests were voiced. Representatives of trade and industry, of agriculture and from the ministry of commerce all followed their specific strategies of transport policy (Westerdiek 1989; Mester 1989; Völkel 1989). In the
course of the industrial revolution the railway transport boomed which resulted in four extremely fragmented centres of transport: one in northern and central Germany, with Leipzig, Berlin, Hannover and Hamburg as their centres; one in the central Rhine-area around Cologne; one in the southwest around Frankfurt; and a Bavarian centre around Munich and Nuremberg” (Gall 1999: 29). In contrast, the supply outside the centres remained difficult. The activities of the private industry led to an outstandingly dynamic development of the transport sector. The result, however, was ambiguous. At the end of the 19th century, the German railway system had erected the biggest network worldwide. On the other hand, there remained serious shortcomings in quality.

The foundation of the Reich in 1871 created the conditions to meet the urgent demands for an integrated transport policy. The “Verein deutscher Eisenbahnverwaltungen” with its nationwide activities for example, executed a technical integration. It promoted the technical standardisation as well as the constant modernisation of the entire railway system. The political integration was also pushed ahead by the “intervention-state” emerging at the time. Since the 1870s, the nationalisation of the railway increased quickly and new tracks were built by the government. This facilitated the control of transport policies, which in turn allowed more socially orientated structural policies to emerge in addition to the commercial calculations which had been hitherto predominant (Gegner/Schöller 2005). Eventually, the central government even strove for social integration by bringing together the people representing the interests of commerce, industry, agriculture and the board of trade in the so-called railway-council.

These regional developments took place in a similar way on the local level. The differences in detail notwithstanding, the European capitals were united by many common interests (McKay 1976; Bendikat 1999; Neutatz 2001). The variety of large transport companies competing with each other, hardly to be influenced politically, was less and less consistent with a reasonable development of traffic in the sense of a homogenous urban structure. Since 1870, the problem in Berlin as well as in other European cities was to find a balance of the interests of private industry, the cities’ finances and the public welfare.

But in spite of these first regional and local attempts towards an integrated transport policy, an arbitrary construction of tracks continued to be typical for the German railway network. For half a century, the „impotence of the night watchmen’s state”
could unfold itself in the national railway industry, “that was allowed to intervene when the private railway companies collapsed by the dozen, as was the case in Germany in 1873” (Wolf 1992: 61).

In 1907, first steps towards a systematic integration were eventually taken by standardising the tariffs in passenger services. With the foundation of the Reichsbahn in 1920, the freight traffic followed. Not until the times of the Republic of Weimar was the coordination of Berlin’s fragmented realm of private sponsors seriously promoted. After the war, the “intervention state” and the organisational constitution of the Reichsbahn were strengthened and the municipal monopolies of transport were established. Taking this into consideration it becomes comprehensible why the public debate about an integrated transport policy did not start before the 1920s. It’s similarities to the present debate are quite amazing.

2.2. Transport Policy in the First Half of the 20th Century – Cooperation beats Competition

“Competition can be healthy or detrimental; often it is both.”

With the extensive use of trucks during the First World War, a serious competitor for the railway appeared on the scene. The state played an important part in the success of this new, hitherto unknown means of transport. The railway and horse carts were needed for war purposes. The military administration developed a widespread network of stationary motor vehicle convoys that took care of the provision of the so-called “home front” (Borscheid 1995). For the first time, the truck proved to be worthwhile on a big scale. After the war, their operation was continued and reinforced by fourteen national transport administrations.

Especially during the first post-war years, when the Reichsbahn was still trying to recover from the effects of war, the lorry became an alternative in freight transport and later also in passenger services. Moreover, the specific advantages of the lorry compared to the railway were soon pointed out. In one of the first publications about “the importance of motor-car roads for traffic policy”, the flexible use and the possibility of door-to-door service are stressed, making the car superior to the train (Winzeler 1924). The increasing importance of the car was obvious, not only in

4 Leibbrand (president of the Reichsbahndirektion) 1931, p. 462.
Germany. “The problem ‘railway and motor vehicle’ that has troubled all railway-nations of the world during the last years, enters a critical stage, resulting from the pressure of economic neediness; it has to be solved one way or another. It must not and cannot continue as before, all those familiar with the conditions on the transport sector fully realize that. The radical changes that have seemingly been in the offing for a long time are hopefully not far away. May they succeed in eliminating all obstacles to a division between railway and motor vehicle that is healthy for the national economy and to find ways to re-establish the unity of the transport system that is absolutely necessary for the conditions in Germany” (Rudolph 1931: 489).5

Correspondingly, the private motor-vehicle companies as well as the Reichspost and the Reichsbahn committed themselves to motor-vehicle transport. This triangle caused severe competition in this segment of the market, a problem that became more and more perceptible. All protagonists agreed that under aspects of business management as well as national economy this competition was disadvantageous. A stronger association of all representatives of transport via governmental planning for the benefit of the German economy was demanded (Busch 1925). In 1922, the Reichsverkehrsministerium had already tried to bring about the cooperation of both sectors of transport. It founded a committee that was to bring about the amalgamation of the motor-vehicle companies with the participation of the Reichsbahn, but it failed due to the different interests. Though the most lucrative routes were usually already served by the railway, the expanding motor-vehicle companies strove for a denser road network for its larger fleet. The Reichsbahn tried to prevent the formation of such competitive transport routes (Borscheid 1995).

During the following years, the problem continued to trouble the contemporaries. The German Reichsbahn in particular had seen the writing on the wall and became active in other segments of the transport market. In 1924 it signed a bilateral contract with the Association of the German Motor-Vehicle companies, in order to “join the railway transport and the transport of motor vehicles for the public benefit” and to lay down guidelines for a cooperation in the “German Railway-Motor-Vehicle-Traffic” (Steinhagen 1929). The goal was a railway-motor-vehicle-transport that made a house-to-house-traffic possible (Zatsch 1993). But yet again competition won and the contract was terminated in 1928. On the basis of this experience, the Reichsbahn

5 For the international debate see Verkehrstechnische Woche (1929), No 5, (England), No 14 (Switzerland), No 28/29/30 (USA).
concluded it had to extend its monopoly in freight transport from the realm of the railway to that of the road. In 1935, it purchased the haulage contractor Schenker & Co., resulting in a liaison that was to last several decades. The Reichsbahn had realised the growing importance of air transport as well: “The speed of planes, taking advantage of the shortest distance between two points, puts the driving times of railway and motor vehicle in the shade. Constant efforts to increase the capacity of the plane present the prospect of intensifying the competition with railway, motor-vehicle and ship. Public and freight transport stand on the threshold of a new era” (Joseph 1926). Against the background of the experiences with the competition in motor vehicle transport that had been detrimental for all participants, the Reichsbahn wanted close cooperation, especially with the Lufthansa. In the sector of passenger services, jointly drawing up timetables and unifying the tariff-rates were to simplify the change between means of transport. This was to be additionally supported by the joint organisation of the local transport between station and airport. Corresponding suggestions were made concerning the transfer of goods. Nevertheless, diverging interests were obviously predominant in making concepts of integrated transport fail again and again.

In 1929 the Reichspost signed a contract with the motor-vehicle companies similar to that of the Reichsbahn. It was confronted with an “unhealthy competition” with the private bus-companies with respect to passenger services. Moreover, the costs for national economy caused by friction loss in the course of competition were constantly pointed out. Instead, integrating different sectors of transport into a joint system were to produce synergy effects. “It is often misjudged that the new means of transport, the bus, does not confront us with the problem where it can replace the existing railway, but where can it supplement the existing railway and be put on for a missing train. The economy of a road remains unproved, even if the bus company can support itself, distributing the charges justly. It is proved only when it leads to the best economic solution after being integrated to the organism of transport as a whole. It does not suffice to discuss the use of the bus as an independent transport problem, without taking care of the effects on the other protagonists in the field of transport or examining the problem of competition. The main task of the bus is not unrestrained competition but cooperation with other means of traffic” (Mock 1930: 585).

---

6 It was in 1991 when the German Bundesbahn had sold Schenker, before it was repurchased in 2001.
In order to achieve a unified transport system where participants can move freely, the so-called “access-exit problem” was discussed, with regard to a smooth transition from one means of transport to another (Jänecke 1930). Today, it preoccupies us again, now called “problem of intersection” (Rammler 2003). Problems of transfer in passenger services as well as in freight transport were discussed in detail. The work on the sector of transport was divided into an outer and inner specialisation (Pirath 1927). The purpose of the outer specialisation was the improvement of each of the transport representatives, the point of the inner specialisation was to raise the quality by bringing them together in one corporation.

At the time, the German Reichsbahn appeared predestined as an ‘intermodal’ supplier in the field of transport. In the emerging transport market it was just trying by way of the aforementioned shares to secure its position in the sector of motor-vehicles. However, the mostly unregulated development of transport with regard to the public services of motor-vehicles led to a “fragmentation of transport” (Bindewald 1931: 169), and the power politics and ignorance of the monopoly corporation opposed such a union (Hölzinger 2001; Knie 2003). Politicians of local governments made a few attempts to counteract this development by setting up special teams. The various participants from politics and economics met in planning committees for the establishment public services of motor-vehicles, subordinate to the head of the local government, to discuss the future lay-out of the transport system.7 These attempts of political intervention on the regional level did not result in decisive effects however. The opinion was generally accepted that from the point of view of national economy only an integration of the various representatives of the transport sectors could bring about improvements for the public good. But at the same time one did not think the interest groups involved capable of such a strategy based on reason and cooperation, because their unbridled pursuance of their economic self-interests was common knowledge (Reuleaux 1931). Instead, a “Deutsche Reichskraftverkehr AG“ (Motor-Vehicle Joint-Stock Company of the German Reich) was called for, situated at the Reich’s ministry of transport. Its “politics of a firm hand” (Spennrath 1931: 3) were to bring about a correction of the transport-conditions. “The central authority (main administration or parent company) would have the task to deal with all central business transactions. It has to lay down the main guidelines for a unified transport

7 For the interest groups which were gathered in the planning committee for the public services of motor-vehicles of the local government of Hildesheim for instance see Mock (1930: 581).
policy, taking the interests of the Reichsbahn and the Reichspost into account. It has to establish connections between industry, commerce and the other representatives of transport and to complete the respective contracts. It is responsible for negotiating with the central authorities about possible suggested changes for legal or sovereign regulations, and with the relevant institutions regarding the construction and maintenance of country roads. That is, it has to represent the corporation in general questions of transport” (Steinhagen 1929: 31). Statutory regulations by the Reich for the entire railway transport and the remaining sectors of transport with respect to short distances were demanded, “its system is to be integrated organically into the well-established system of the means of long-distance transport, at the same time assigning the tasks of transport to the respectively right means of transport. In each system a healthy competition ruled by the economics of transport will prove most fruitful. An expert and decisive transport planning for sensibly delimited districts, leadership regarding the responsibilities by the agents of one Reichs-Office, and the same rights and duties for all protagonists of traffic form the basis for an advantageous solution” (Reuleaux 1931: 632).

These suggestions may be surprising from the present-day point of view because they unanimously identify economic competition, presently seen as something worth striving for, as the cause for an uneconomic development of transport. But at the time, even the “Deutsche Industrie- und Handelstag” (DIH) opposed the then predominating competitive situation in transport. In its memorandum for the reformation of the German transport system of 1930 it was pointed out that this situation had negative repercussions even for the national economy. The DIH concludes that a nationwide integration of transport is needed to contribute to an efficient performance of transport economy: Just like an organic cooperation of Reichsbahn and Reichspost is required, it is also necessary between the two national administrations, the motor transport companies and the remaining registered motor transport businesses” (DIH 1930: 71).

At the same time, the world congress of motor transport proved that the promotion of an integrated transport policy was no particularly German feature. It was rather an international strategy that can best be compared to the recent efforts for an integrated transport policy within the framework of the European process of integration. Even then the world congress expressed the wish “that all countries might make an effort to bring about the cooperation of the motor car with the railway,
bearing the public welfare in mind. That is, every transport should be carried out in
the most economic way and especially the legal and fiscal transport regime to be
fashioned as liberally as possible should not oppose the realisation of the wish
presented here” (Pourcel 1929: 27).

The first efforts regarding an integrated transport policy made in the 1920 already
comprised the three dimensions that are claimed to be crucial for today’s strategies
of integration. The technical integration of the different transport systems and the
political integration were hurried along. The intention was a comprehensive strategy,
uniting different departments, joining socio-political considerations with those of
transport policy and economy. The significance of a social integration grew with the
emergence of different social interest groups. “There was hardly any syndicate or
socio-political relevant group whose opinions concerning the railway system were not
heard” (Pohl/Kill 1999: 84). The generally desired fusion that was to bring a
reasonable solution and to take the public welfare into account kept foundering
because of particular economic interests.

A “solution” of the transport problem by the “firm hand” of an integrating central
authority became possible only with the national socialist regime, though not in the
sense of the public welfare. The national socialists translated into action what had
been discussed for years, in the sector of transport as well as in other social fields. 8
Right from the start of their reign they used the organisational power of the German
Reichsbahn and engaged it to set up the subsidiary Reichsautobahnen (motorways
of the Reich) responsible for the road works (Gottwaldt/Dorpmüller 1996;
Schütz/Gruber 1996). With the help of the German Reichsbahn, the ‘intermodal’
transport supplier that had so long been demanded thus appeared for the first – and
until today last – time.9 First, the National Socialists followed the strategy of
integrating the various means of transport, as demonstrated by the concept of the
„Breitspurbahn“ ("broad gauge railway") (Joachimsthaler 1989). One variety of this
oversized train was a special motorail train. It was supposed to bring the national
comrades and their Volkswagen to their distant destinations, where they could have

---

8 The same is true for the term “construction of social housing” coined by the national
socialists. They could take up the tradition of cooperative and non-profit housing program of
the Weimar Republic. By assembling individual building companies under the roof of one
corporation they created the enterprise “Neue Heimat” in 1941. In post-war times it became
the largest European sponsor for housing construction, see Fuhrich (1984).
9 It was only under those particular political circumstances that the company finally
succeeded in becoming a partner of Lufthansa.
used their cars for local purposes. In spite of such extensive plans in accordance with an integrated transport policy, the national socialists finally favoured the ideal of the automobilisation. The actual developments and the preparations for war thwarted the rhetoric of a "motorisation of the people". Nevertheless, the political decisions in favour of the automobile served as the basis for its spreading in post-war times (Wolf 1992).

A revival of the idea of an integrated transport policy did not assert itself before the 60s.

2.3. From the Post-War-Time to the 1960s: Renaissance of an Integrated Transport Policy in Neo-Liberal Times

"In the past few years the most important legal foundations for transport and communication have been established. Consequently, the most urgent task of the federal government with regards to traffic policy will now be to bring the individual participants in tune with each other. The goal will have to be to coordinate railways and road traffic, inland navigation and ocean shipping as well as future air traffic, preserving existing values and at the same time making the highest possible profits at the lowest possible costs." 10

In Germany, the debate on an integrated transport policy, aiming at the coordination of railway and road transport, was reopened immediately after World War II, explicitly referring to the 1920s. In the beginning of the 1950s, the president of the Swiss Road Transport Association, Johann Britschgl, referred to these transport debates when he wrote that "the coordination of transport, or more correctly, the means of traffic, which is mainly the discussion between the scheduled public and the individual, private transport, has been a frequently discussed topic since the success of the automobile" (Britschgl 1952: 29).

The vice-president of the Society of Road Transport Research, Josef Oberbach, also called to mind the time after World War I, when it still seemed as if the two sectors of transport, the railways and the road, might complement one another. In the meantime, however, the situation presented itself quite differently. “Today, we are in

10 Chancellor Konrad Adenauer October 20th 1953 in the German Parliament.
the midst of a transport revolution, triggered by the conflicts between road transport and the railways” (Oberbach 1954: 94).

Oberbach realized that the resulting competition between the participants of transport posed a problem for transport policy and argued in favour of a “sensible juxtaposition”. A division of functions and tasks, in accordance with the respective means of transport, was to achieve the synthesis of the entire sector of transport.

The contributions by Britschgl and Oberbach represented only the beginning of long years of debate which was logged in the international yearbook of transport under the telling title “railways and the road”. It was published from 1951 till 1960 by the transport scientist Leo Brandt. Coexistence and coordination were keywords in the dispute about a “transport policy as a regulatory policy” (Predöhl 1956; see also Predöhl 1958), which was to ensure a sensible transport development with a balanced relationship between the various participants. The well known transport scientist Andreas Predöhl argued in favour of a “pragmatic transport policy” that took the specific requirements of the various transport sectors into account. He opposed the dogma of the emerging neoliberal philosophy of economics, “that the principle of laissez-faire leads to disorder in almost all areas of transport, in the sense of a deviation from balance which is permanent, not just occasional or cyclical” (Predöhl 1956: 41).

Predöhl's view was shared by his colleague Walter Hamm. In his frequently quoted study “Schiene und Straße. Das Ordnungsproblem im Güterverkehr zu Lande” he stated: “Experience teaches us that what is right for private economy, under the conditions of the transport market does not always lead to the success aspired to for national economics” (Hamm 1954: 137). In his opinion, a governmental regulation was necessary in order to guarantee the coexistence and cooperation of the different structures of companies and markets of transport.

The extensive claim of an integrated transport policy being thereby demanded was also expressed by the director of the “Siedlungsverband Ruhrkohlebezirk”, in this case from the point of view of regional development (also in the yearbook “Schiene und Straße”): “Regional development means the task to use a joint area as efficiently and as balanced as possible, according to the principles relevant to its social, economic and traffic requirements. The structuring of transport technology provides the basis for social and economic development. Transport technology should therefore never be an end in itself, but always a servant of man and his work”
(Rappaport 1951: 22). In accordance with this view, Rappaport concluded his statements on the close interrelation between social, technical and economic aspects of traffic development pointing out that “all questions concerning the planning of traffic or putting plans into practice can only be answered by taking all the other factors into consideration” (ibid.).

The renowned engineer and transport scientist Carl Pirath had already had considerable influence on the debates of the 1920s. In his view, the destiny of healthy, grown – today we would say sustainable – environmental planning depended on “setting limits to the free market economy or the liberalisation of economy where transport economy is concerned, whose special task it is to open up public spaces for everyone under the same conditions; the principle of free competition should not be pushed too far. Without a legal framework, the transport economy will not achieve its goals, and it is the business of transport policy to lay the foundations before it is too late” (Pirath 1954: 54). 50 years ago, Pirath finally phrased an agenda surprisingly similar to the central idea of an integrated transport policy which is followed today. It is therefore described in detail: A reasonable traffic development that is positive for society as a whole cannot be achieved by having the different sectors of traffic compete with each other”, but “all the different means of transport have to do their duty with respect to national economy. Only those participants of transport can fulfil their public responsibilities who work on the solution of the fundamental problem. This demands a few sacrifices but results in economic success on the whole. This duty leaves enough resources for each means of transport to fulfil the needs it is best suited to by providing a qualified performance. Part of the great moral duties of the state lies in the solution of this basic problem of transport policy, which is why a unity in the governmental transport policy has to be achieved. The privileges of individual transport companies must not undermine the unity and equality” (ibid.).

However, this debate took place against the background of over-politicization affecting all social spheres, which was caused by the national socialist regime. In Post-War West Germany the demand for the exertion of governmental influence was about as little popular as it is today. A fundamental scepticism over any form of political intervention prevailed. This was reflected especially in the field of economic policy. Until the 60s, a neoliberal strategy predominated using the concept of “social

11 See the preceding chapter.
market economy” (Ambrosius 1999; Wegmann 2002). At that time, the traffic policy considered it its duty to support the dynamic processes in the market, too (Klenke 1993; Südbeck 1994). Even in the Weimar Republic, cultural dispositions, contributing to the perception of the car as a symbol of individual freedom, had started to blend with mundane economic interests. The negative experiences with the collectivism of National Socialism had doubtlessly served to further intensify the attractiveness of the cultural inclination towards individualism (Sachs 1990). This attitude was made plain by a pronounced aversion to any form of bureaucratic regulations. In Germany, this had strong effects on transport and explains the far-reaching deregulation measures in the traffic regulations of the time. However, substantial economic interests causing a continuous promotion of private individual transport were much more significant than cultural affinities. Meanwhile, public transport was structurally neglected. Politics and economy built a battery of interests, both aiming at economic growth via automobilisation.12 “Whereas the years of the Weimar Republic had been turbulent for the car industry, its development being totally dependent of what happened in economy, especially during the world economic crisis between 1929 and 1932, the West German car industry could be described as an “industry of growth” as early as the mid-fifties” (Kuhm 1997: 53).

Consequently, one focussed on the modernisation of transport that was finally carried through in Germany as well. With the car turning more and more into a basic consumer item, its economic and political significance increased. The individual motorised transport was considered a basic feature of democratic societies, with especially the USA serving as a model. In contrast, the public transport supplied by the state was often seen as a remnant of fascist or socialist dictatorship. This resulted in the hardening of the structural division of public and private transport on the one hand, on the other hand, an ideal of the car became widely accepted that has dominated the transport policy until today (Canzler 1996).13

12 The economic lobby includes the „Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil Club” (General German Automobile Club), representing the mouthpiece of the car industry, the “Deutsche Autoliga” (German Liga of Cars), representing the road construction companies, and finally the “Forum der Verkehrsteilnehmer” (Forum of the Transport Participants), an association of tyre manufacturers.

13 Burghard Horn is right: The separation of the different modes of transport is a central prerequisite for the assertion of the car-centered transport, and urban planning. However, his claim that the demand for a separation of the different means of transport was undisputed does not seem tenable against the background of the recurrent attractiveness of the idea of integration presented above (Horn 1992).
The transport policy that was orientated towards the widespread ideal of the car and focussed unilaterally on private transport has always caused social disputes. Even at the beginning of the 60s contemporaries felt threatened by the new phenomenon of a crush of individual transport. This was repeatedly expressed in graphic accounts: “Sixteen years after the end of the war, the cities are now again without wounds and seemingly in full blossom. And yet, they are threatened by chaos. Like a swarm of locusts falling upon the fields, the cars take over streets and squares, lodge in parks, green spaces and the last groves, and claim more and more space with insatiable greed. Urban development, glorified by idealists on fantastic sketches with dreamy naivety gives way to constructions for transport. Man is put aside and gets into bad ways in the true sense of the word” (Zellner 1961: 15). In the 50s, with the USA leading the way, the ideal of the “car-adapted city” (Reichow 1959) still prevailed. In the 60s however, the negative consequences of the extensive development of private transport became more apparent (Schildt 1997). The Deutsche Städtetag took unusual measures, appropriate for the special situation, to draw attention to the transport problems of cities. In the spring of 1961, fifty press, radio, and tv-reporters were invited to a flight journey of three days to get an idea of the transport problems with the situations in eight cities in West Germany used as examples (Först 1970).

Two central aspects of the debate in those days shall be presented here, as they demonstrate an early appreciation of the problems of transport development. In the first place, the above-mentioned displacement of man by cars was deplored. Urban planning focussed on the demands of the car drivers and flagrantly neglected the local public transport that was considerably more efficient. “Regarding transport planning, a one-sided preferential treatment of motor transport when redesigning cities is not only unjustified, but absurd. All experience proves that the demands made by the individual motor transport for space for its flow, and for additional parking facilities cannot be met even by the most generous extensions of streets” (Lönnecke 1961)

Shortly before, the individual transport in the USA had been the

14 I do not share Dietmar Klenke’s view (1997), even though he fits this action uncenemoniously into the context of the preference for cars prevailing at the time. Klenke is undoubtedly correct in discerning a true change of paradigm only at the beginning of the 70s. However, one should acknowledge the fact that there had been first signs of a fundamentally different orientation of transport policy long before. In fact, neither the programmatic considerations of the 20s and the 60s nor those of the 70s were carried out.

15 But the following is only one side of the discussion. In the Spiegel, the other side had the floor and insistently demanded the construction of motor-ways, fly-overs, viaducts and two-storey crossroads in inner cities.
symbol for the development of the individual in a free society. But now the Europeans appeared shocked by the wastelands of American urban landscapes. “The American ‘concrete landscapes’ have become an absolute nightmare for the Europeans, who when they think of cities have something else in mind than an assembly of blocks on pieces of ground eventually left over by oversized highways” (ibid.). This addresses the second important objection to the individual mass transport of the time. Apart from the destruction of inner cities and its inhumane consequences, the fragmentation of the suburbs so near to nature as a side effect of mobility was criticised.

Just like the debates of the 1920s, these critical discussions of transport were no typically German phenomenon. They were strongly influenced by the essay “Transport in Towns” commissioned by the British ministry of transport (Buchanan 1963).¹⁶ On account of the negative consequences of the exploding and for the most part unregulated spread of cars for urban development, the authors plead for a new political regulation of urban and transport development. The scientists expressly speak of an “integrated policy” (ibid. 198). This might help to better coordinate the development of transport and housing now and in the future. By this, the authors opposed the predominant particularism of the time, brought about by the private investors’ interests in quick profits. “If private developers are going to play a major part it would seem necessary to encourage them to have a greater sense of responsibility for the public weal than has been evident since the war” (ibid. 198). The goal was a holistic, or as we say today, sustainable approach to urban and transport politics, reflecting on the ecological, social and economical consequences of actions.¹⁷ This political integration aimed at a comprehensive strategy beyond the department of transport. Apart from that, a technical integration for a closer linking of

¹⁶ Two years later, the study by Hollatz and Tamms (1965) “Problems of local transport in the Federal Republic of Germany” appeared, that had been commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Transport. The authors expressly referred to the English study and reached very similar conclusions.

¹⁷ ”We mean by this that grants would be available for dealing with traffic problems, but the latter term would have a new definition encompassing accessibility and environment. If suitable networks and environmental areas are to be established, it would seem that the grant system should operate in such a way that the plans which secure the best accessibility (using the term in a wide sense) and the best environment for the least cost ought to attract the most favourable rates of assistance. Such an approach would encourage the authority to strive for efficient, co-ordinated schemes, with a proper fusion of the town redevelopment and traffic planning processes” (Buchanan 1963: 200).
public and private transport was demanded, as well as the social integration of the various protagonists who were affected by measures of transport planning. Even though the new central idea of integrated transport politics had prominent advocates in science and politics, first attempts to implement it met with little social response in post war times. On the contrary, the separate development of the transport systems continued nearly the same, as did the independent development of towns and transport systems. Only at the beginning of the 70s did the resulting problems become so dramatic that the idea of an integrated traffic policy experienced a third revival.

2.4. From the 1970s until Today – Integrated Traffic Policy in Times of Economic Crisis

“Synchronise public interests with that of the private citizen.”

In the early 70s the central idea of an integrated transport policy that had been phrased by the expert committee in 1964 was taken up again. This had been preceded by economically liberal transport politics. Formally, it relied on the competition between public and private transport, but it did not consider the characteristic structural differences of the two sectors. This led to the factual discrimination of public transport. “The consistent application of the capitalist principle of acquisition and profit on every transport corporation was believed to guarantee the best transport control. But especially on the transport sector this principle produced absurd results, as the costs and profits of transport can only partly be counted in cash. Most national economic and socio-political costs and profits were left out of consideration” (Linder/Maurer/Resch 1975: 53). The individual benefit of private transport for example was paid for at the price of the wear and tear of collective goods. These costs, if they could be externalised at all, were invisible at first. This development reached its peak in 1971 with the presentation of the Fernstraßen-Bedarfsplan (plan of highway demands) by the Federal Minister of Transport of that time, Georg Leber. Leber’s explicit goal to force up the highway construction until

---

18 George Leber, quoted by Achim Diekmann (1971: 133).
19 Three years before his “programme for the recovery of the German transport system”, later to be called “Leber Plan”, that pursued a much more balanced strategy of transport policies,
85% of the population had to drive no more than ten kilometres from their home to the nearest motorway entry clearly shows the philosophy of the time that dominated transport policy. The forced mass motorisation brought a marked decline in the quality of urban life in its wake, which finally led to a growing appreciation of the problem in the early 70s.

In 1973, the social liberal coalition initiated a change of paradigm with its Kursbuch für Verkehrspolitik (Instructions for a Transport Policy). It questioned the simplistic application of the principles of market economy for all sectors of transport. Instead, it demanded “to solve the growing conflict between fulfilling social needs on the one hand and satisfying private interests on the other” (BMV 1973: 11). As the profits in private economy can be accompanied by losses in the national economy, it was necessary to take stock of the national economy with respect to transport.

With the publishing of the report by the expert committee for problems of the environment, *Auto und Umwelt*, (the Car and the Environment), the Kursbuch got scientific support (Nebelung/Meyer 1974). In both studies, profound analyses of the problems of transport were presented, and transport policy was understood to be a central part of social politics. According to the scientists, the development of transport cannot be looked upon without considering how various parts of society were influenced by it and vice versa. “The committee has to analyse all interactions of the individual motor vehicle and the areas of life. It has to take implications of legislation and social politics into account that are reflected by the commercials of the car industry and by its economic interconnections” (ibid. 57). Consequently, the expert committee also saw the solution of the transport problems in “the integrated planning of transport” (ibid. 58). It did not one-sidedly oppose the individual mass motorisation, but rather stressed the invaluable contribution of the car to a higher quality of life by creating more possibilities for experience and social contact. Nevertheless, the committee voted for a more balanced development of public and private transport, to be guaranteed by planning strategies that integrated the various political departments and the protagonists of traffic and transport. In the context of an integrated transport policy, the expert committee particularly favoured the political and social integration, while the Federal Government also supported concepts for the technical integration of public and private transport. In order to enhance the attractiveness of public...
transport, new modes of transport were to adapt the public transport to individual preferences and to collectivize the individual transport at the same time (Schmucki 1997). The objectives of the "Verband Öffentlicher Verkehrsbetriebe", VÖV (Association of Public Transport Companies) demonstrates how widely accepted the central idea of an integrated transport strategy had become (Walter 1995). The association developed a publicity campaign which explicitly pointed out how ideally public and individual transport complement one another. In those days, the VÖV still advocated a spirit of partnership, free of discriminatory comments about individual transport, quite unlike the often aggressive anti-car-campaigns that were to follow.

In the early 1970s, the persuasiveness of the central idea found its institutional expression in science and politics. Science reacted by establishing new subjects in universities, such as the subject area “integrated transport planning” at the Technical University in Berlin. Politics, on the other hand, decided in favour of a fundamental reform of the federal ministry of traffic (Dienel 2004). Until then, the ministry had been divided into four sections, each representing an individual sector of transport: railways, roads, shipping and air transport. This organisational structure resulted in competition within the ministry of transport, but was presented to the outside world as a supposedly unified policy by the minister of transport. As the fragmented structure caused by the organisational structure was incompatible with the philosophy of integration now aspired to, it was to be abolished in order to make it possible to put the idea of an integrated transport policy into practice.

For this purpose, a division on basic transport policy was founded, whose task consisted in joining the individual sections in a unified concept that comprised all traffic sectors.

But although by the end of the 70s the department on basic transport policy had become the largest section, it did not succeed in overcoming the conflicting interests and push through with a comprehensive strategy for all sectors of transport.20

Against the background of the energy crises in the early 70s, the debates about reforms in transport policy were followed with keen attention. But after the crises had been overcome a few years later there was a dramatic swing in public opinion. From that time onwards, the worldwide recession dominated strategic considerations, also in the field of transport politics. When they had to deal with the crisis, local

---

20 For a detailed description of the resistance caused by personell and structures see Dienel (2004).
governments remembered the economic significance of the car industry and adapted their politics accordingly. Not even the smallest steps of the extensive plans for an integrated transport policy were put into action. “This shows us two facts: First, attempts for structural reform have to be quickly discarded when due to drastic economic changes and crises in the production of consumer goods the only way for politics to safeguard jobs is to boost new private investment unrestrainedly. Secondly we clearly see the high costs of such politics of adaptation. Against better knowledge such short-term measures in politics have to be bought dearly, problems in society and environment and the needs of the society as a whole have to come second to the compulsions of business economy” (Linder/Maurer/Resch 1975: 65).

Taking the present revival of the central idea of an integrated transport policy into account, the question comes up to what degree socio-political conditions have changed in favour of integrated transport concepts.

3 Résumé

Seen in the light of history, the beginnings of modern transport development show that integration constitutes a perpetual political challenge. The cohesion of the entire transport system and its integrative social functions were subject to constant changes. Only when urban and transport planning became autonomous disciplines during the time between the two World Wars was a systematic development of an integrated transport policy called for. With the emergence of the welfare state, the significance of the public good increased. In transport policy, too, common interests had to be considered just as attentively as individual ones. The first debate on an integrated transport policy reached its peak and its conclusion – however, with an altogether different meaning – with the socio-political conformity in the welfare state of National Socialism. Neither the revision of an integrated transport policy of the 60s nor that of the 70s were followed by concrete measures. Instead, a neoliberal hegemony has again been establishing itself since the mid-seventies. Its effects become more and more perceptible, especially in the realm of transport. The meanwhile considerably fragmented British transport system can serve as an example for studying in concrete form how neoliberal reforms affect the transport sector (Schöller 2003). The central idea of an integrated transport policy,
given out by the EU-Commission, is being *rhetorically* propagated in the UK just like in all the other Western European countries. In Germany, just like in Great Britain, ambitions and reality of the strategies of transport policy are far apart. While measures of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation initiate processes of technical, political and social disintegration, it remains yet unclear how a reintegration of the transport system according to the central idea of an integrated transport policy can be conceived under the aforementioned circumstances. Therefore the European Union in its mid-term review of the European Commission’s 2001 transport White Paper noticed, that there is no progress to an integrated transport policy, even more without a policy change the transport development will go further on in a non-sustainable manner (COM 2006). This disillusioning end result shows the present revival of the central idea of an integrated policy in a less favourable light. It is true however, that it has provided valuable points of reference on the level of discussions to this day. However, its discussion and presentation in the media never resulted in concrete measures. Two contradicting conclusions can be drawn: First one might infer that there is insurmountable social resistance against the central idea of an integrated transport policy. It is therefore no realistic option and should be abandoned. However, it can just as well be assumed that the same central idea has been revived again and again for decades because generally intelligible reasons to translate it into action could be presented.

Against the background of its historic development, outlined above, it can be said that the need for an integrated transport policy regularly followed periods of a mostly liberal economic development. Politics repeatedly reacted to new developmental phases dominated by severe economic competition with bringing up the central idea of an integrated transport policy, hoping to prevent the disintegrative effects of competition at least rhetorically. Until today, these political reactions remained short-lived and the defensive strategy did not change into an offensive one. Against the background of historic experience it is certainly questionable whether an integrated transport policy is feasible, considering the present conditions of modern societies (Wagner 1994). The historic process of the development of transport outlined here, obviously oscillating continuously between movements of integration and disintegration, rather seems to mirror a basic pattern of capitalist nationalisation.
Accordingly, the present raging of particular interests on the transport-market will be followed by a phase of political disciplinary measures. The renewed renaissance of the central idea of an integrated transport policy may indicate such a change of paradigm. However, it is to be expected that just like in the past, transport policy will yet again amount to nothing more than helpless corrections of developments on which it has rather limited influence. In this case one would have to admit that the expectation of a sustainable development of transport, associated with the central idea of an integrated transport policy, comes up against limiting factors, given the present conditions of society.21

21 In the context of the research project `Mobilität im Wettbewerb´ (mobility under competition), sponsored by the Hans-Böckler-Foundation, the author investigates the compatibility of an integrated transport policy with the deregulation of the transport market, see Schöller (2006).
Notes:


Acknowledgements:
I am indebted to the members of the project group on mobility at the Social Science Research Centre in Berlin for advice and permanent support. My special thanks to Marianne Henry for her helping hand by the translation into good English.

Oliver Schwedes (born Schöller), Prof. Dr., has the professorship in Integrated Transport Planning at the Technische Universität Berlin in Germany. He is doing research on the topics of transport and urban policy with respect to the options and limits of political regulation. He is editor of the “Handbuch der Verkehrspolitik” (Handbook of Transport Policy), published 2016.