

New Urban Tourism and its Implications for Tourism Mobility – the Case of Munich

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Abstract

For a long time, urban tourists have focused on traditional customised attractions within the so-called ‘tourist bubble’. For the past couple of years, discussion regarding the ‘New Urban Tourist’ has emphasised that so-called ‘explorer tourists’ tend to discover neighbourhoods ‘off the beaten track’ with the intention of experiencing a city ‘like the locals’. The traditional spatial segregation of locals and tourists has thus become increasingly blurred. Up to now, however, little interest has been paid to the implications of ‘New Urban Tourism’ on the mobility patterns and the needs of explorer tourists regarding transportation options. Leaving the tourist bubble and merging with the locals in residential areas means that a more intensive and differentiated use of mobility options has emerged in these areas. This presents a challenge to urban mobility service providers to take into account the specific needs of new types of visitors more carefully.

Taking the second-most popular urban destination in Germany – Munich – as an example, this paper searches for empirical clues concerning new spatial orientation and mobility patterns as well as specific needs of the explorer tourists. Preliminary findings indicate that the new spatial orientation patterns of urban tourists present a challenge for mobility service providers.

JEL Classification: R40, R49, L83, M30

Keyword: New Urban Tourism, Tourism Mobility, Munich

1 Urban tourism: a dynamic market segment

1.1 Urban tourism as a growth market

Urban tourism is one of the most dynamic market segments in tourism (cf. Kagermeier, 2016). One indicator of the intense growth of this segment is the numbers of arrivals of overnight tourists in Germany's 'large' cities (i.e. those with more than 100,000 inhabitants; see Figure 1).

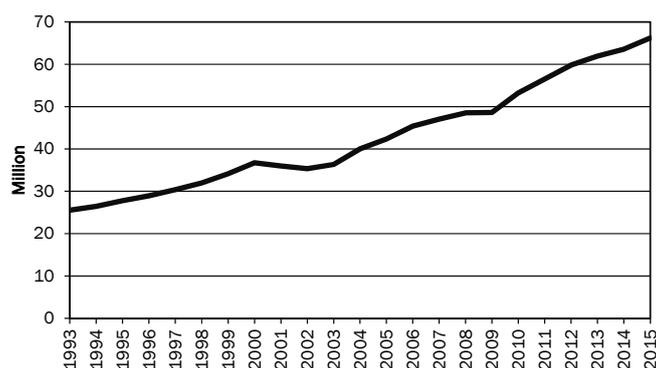


Figure 1: Arrivals in large cities in Germany between 1993 and 2015

Source: Own design using data from Statistisches Bundesamt, 2016

Arrivals in large cities have increased by more than 140% over the last two decades, compared to an increase of 'only' 50% in other German destinations. But urban tourism has not only been characterised by mere quantitative growth over the last decades – substantial changes in target groups and the options for tourism must also be noted.

1.2 New Urban Tourism as a paradigm contributing to a qualitative dynamic

The driving force behind these qualitative changes in urban tourism can be seen in the post-Fordist, flexible working and living circumstances of the target group (Kagermeier, 2013). One of the consequences of this is the blurring distinction between tourism and the everyday and the idea of dedifferentiation between those two spheres (Lash, 1990; Urry, 1995). Taking part in the everyday life of the city and its inhabitants is often seen as being central to the tourist experience (Maitland, 2008). The characteristics of this 'New Urban Tourism' are that visitors seek experiences 'off the beaten track' – which they regard as 'authentic' – with the intention of experiencing a city 'like the locals'. Since this type of visitor has similar rhythms and needs to those who live or work among the creative class (Vogelpohl, 2012), it is gentrifying urban areas in particular that are becoming more and more frequented by external visitors. "While people increasingly 'touristify' ... their everyday life, tourists tend to take their home behaviors with them when they travel" (Pappalepore et al., 2014, p. 231). As a result, the distinction between inhabitants and visitors is becoming vaguer. This tendency is on the one hand fostered by postmodern patterns of multi-local living, where profes-

sionals have different and changing spatial reference points for working and living in relationships, practising a lifestyle described as cosmopolitan urban nomads (Pappalopore et al. 2010, p. 220). On the other hand, the blurring of the distinction between everyday life and tourism is intensified by the VFR (Visit Friends and Relatives) tourism segment, when inhabitants and their visitors enjoy the amenities of cities together, as well as the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events) segment with business travellers blending professional and leisure activities during their stay.

Information and communications technologies facilitate and shape these new tourism behaviour patterns (Kagermeier, 2011). The permanent accessibility of travellers contributes to breaking down the traditional separation between being on holiday and being in the everyday world. Communication with friends and acquaintances at home or all over the world via social media platforms such as Instagram or WhatsApp allows for constant interaction with people far away from the destination and the communication of experiences made there. On the other hand, the near-ubiquitous availability of internet access with VPN links to the office server allows some kind of ‘World Wide Working’, even when on holiday. Moreover, ubiquitous available information also has an impact on tourists’ changing wishes and needs during their stay, and facilitates and strengthens the trend toward spontaneous activities and discovering the urban atmosphere.

1.3 ‘New Urban Tourism’ as a challenge for mobility service providers

According to the perspectives that describe the “New Mobilities Paradigm” (Sheller, Urry, 2006), these changing spatial and activity patterns (with visitors leaving the “Tourist Bubble” (Urry, 1990)) are hypothesised to affect the mobility patterns of visitors as well. One way this happens is that tourism mobility is blurring with everyday mobility patterns (Hannam, 2009 Gronau, 2017). Additionally, it seems presumable that mobile transport and information, as well as mobile booking and reservation services, have also begun to play a role in facilitating the use of a broader spectrum of transport means and more flexible usage (Gronau, 2017). Nevertheless, very little empirical evidence has been collected up to this point to validate the hypothesis that new urban tourists use new visitor mobility schemes. The aim of this contribution is to search for empirical findings that may support this theoretical assumption. Taking the case of Munich, this paper examines the spatial and mobility patterns of visitors to investigate whether they support the hypothesis of changing structures.

If new mobility patterns can be identified, one of the crucial questions is whether the mobility service providers are adequately facing the challenge of addressing the new target group. The main target group of local public transport companies (who function as the critical element of transport service providers) are local inhabitants. This target group remains in the service area for a long period of time and thus there are many different opportunities to cater to them. On the other hand, transport service companies need to provide effective, attention-grabbing communication if they want to attract short-term visitors. They often never get a ‘second chance’ if they fail to interest visitors immediately before or shortly after their arrival (Gronau, Kagermeier, 2007).

In addition to the main tourist attractions, traditional attractions such as the Museum Quarter, the Deutsches Museum, the Landtag (Bavarian Parliament) and the Friedensengel focus on classical, culture-oriented urban tourists. Secondary tourism attractions also include various purpose-built leisure attractions such as the Bavaria Filmstudios (an amusement park on the site of the film studios), BMW Welt (museums and exhibitions on the premises of the local car producer) and Allianz Arena (home of the Bayern Munich football team and open to visitors for guided tours). In sum, Munich can be characterised as a traditional urban tourism destination with rather many attractions inside the ‘tourist bubble’ (see Figure 3).

The historical city centre in Munich is – like in many other Central European cities – surrounded by neighbourhoods dating from the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Other than Schwabing, which has been on tourists’ itineraries due to its cultural function even since the beginning of the 20th century, these neighbourhoods (Maxvorstadt, Ludwigsvorstadt, Gärtnerplatzviertel/Glockenbachviertel, Haidhausen and Giesing) are not seen as traditional tourist attractions. Given the tendencies towards so-called New Urban Tourism, one would expect that these areas, which have undergone or are undergoing various degrees of gentrification processes, might attract new types of visitor. During summertime, the gravel banks of the Isar River south of the city centre are rather popular places to visit. This area, called Flaucher, attracts visitors who simply wish to go for a stroll, bathe in the sun, enjoy an informal barbecue or just sip from a bottle or two in the evenings.

2.3 Methodology of the empirical research

To obtain empirical data on the spatial and mobility patterns of tourists in Munich, a standardised questionnaire was designed and used in face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted by a group of geography students from Trier University between 16 and 21 May 2016. Following the assumption that visitors on a day trip might focus to a greater extent on the main tourist attractions, only overnight guests were included in the sample. In light of their increased familiarity with mobile applications and their greater tendency to explore off-the-beaten-track areas (Kagermeier, 2011), this study focuses on younger tourists. Therefore, only visitors under the age of 35 were included in the survey.

The total number of sample cases was 269. Of these, 54.3% were visitors from abroad, thus rather accurately mirroring the share of foreign tourists in Munich. 52.4% of the interviewees were first-time visitors (bearing in mind the assumption that repeat visitors tend to visit secondary tourist attractions to a higher extent; see Kagermeier 2011) 39% of respondents were questioned in the historical city centre, leaving 61% questioned outside the historical city centre, increasing the chances of not only addressing the target group of relatively traditional, culture-oriented urban tourists.

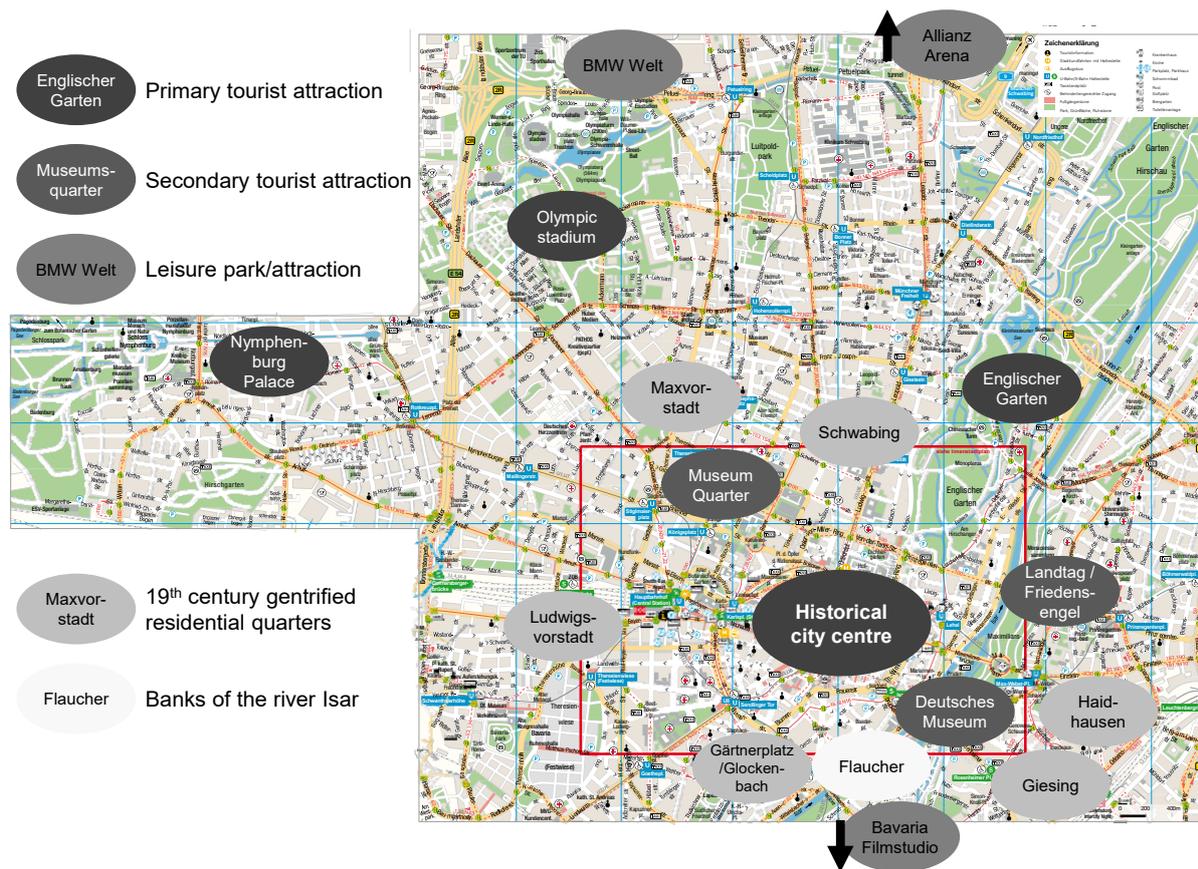


Figure 3: Tourist attractions in the city of Munich

Source: Own design using a base map from: LHM-RAW, 2015

3 Spatial visit patterns of urban tourists in Munich

Both first-time and repeat visitors frequent the main tourist attractions in Munich to a high degree (see Figure 4). This means that almost all repeat visitors return to the historical city centre, which thus seems to exert a high level of attraction. The study also revealed that the other main attractions outside the historical city centre see a slightly higher share of repeat visitors, but were visited by at least almost half of the first-time visitors as well.

The differences between first-time and repeat visitors become more evident when looking at the secondary tourist attractions (see Figure 5). The three leisure attractions representing the ‘experience’ orientation of tourism in the late 20th century (see Kagermeier 2013) – Bavaria Filmstudios, BMW Welt and Allianz Arena – attract the highest share of visitors among the secondary attractions, with two of them showing a significantly higher frequentation, according to the surveys.

Many tourists also visited museums in the Museum Quarter, the Deutsches Museum or the Landtag/Friedensengel, all of which are attractions for culture-oriented tourists located close to the historical centre. Again for two of these locations, the proportion of repeat visitors is higher than that of first-time visitors. The influence of hosts as a filter for activities is apparent in the case of the Landtag/Friedensengel, where several

first-time visitors were part of the VFR segment and were accompanied or at least directed there by their hosts.

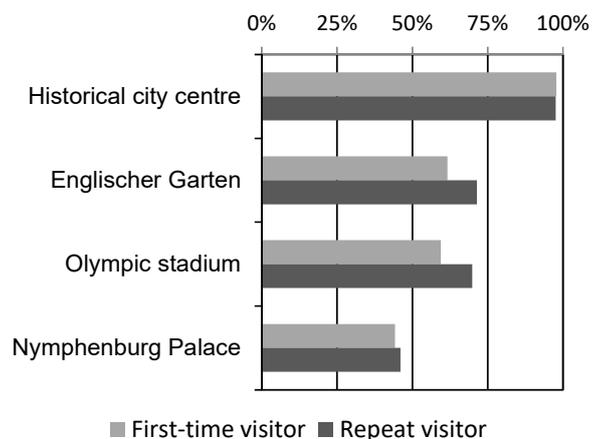


Figure 4: Main tourist attractions visited in Munich
Source: Own survey

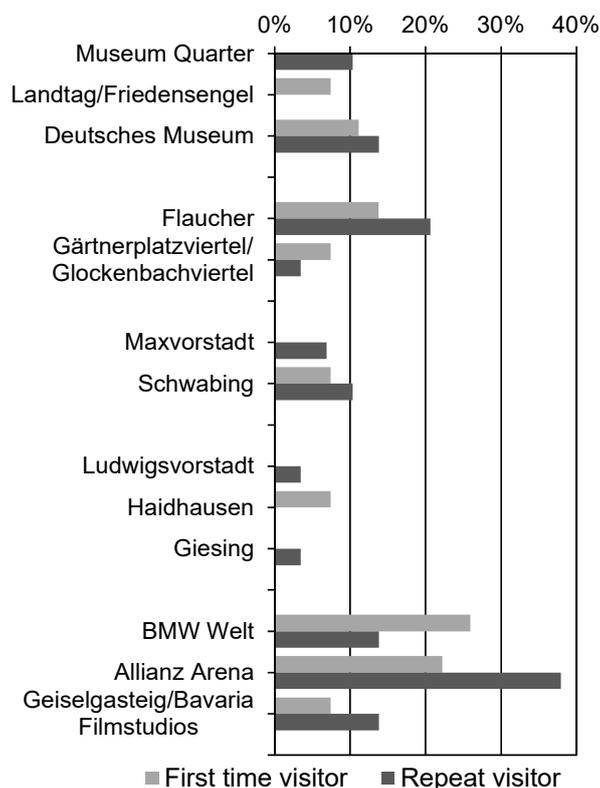


Figure 5: Secondary tourist attractions visited in Munich
Source: Own survey

Even if the 19th-century gentrified (residential) areas surrounding the historical city centre are frequented much less often than traditional tourist attractions, at least some of the interviewed tourists said that they had been there. Of course, this fact might be influenced to a certain extent by bias during the interview. The question concerning the places they visited other than the four main tourist attractions was an open question. Observations during the interviews revealed that visitors tended to name well-known places

first, and perhaps did not name all of the places where they had been. Nevertheless, it was possible to discover traces of the exploration of gentrified areas by tourists.

The next two sections present multimodal mobility possibilities in Munich followed by an analysis of the means of transport used by visitors to see if evidence of new spatial motion patterns correspond with new mobility patterns.

4 Innovative mobility options for ‘New Urban Tourists’

As the central parts of metropolises are usually accessible by a well-developed public transport network, the use of public transport by urban tourists is quite common (Le-Klähn, Hall, 2015, Le-Klähn, Gerike, Hall, 2014; Gronau, Kagermeier, 2004, p. 316; Gronau 2016, p. 2). One of the reasons for choosing Munich as an example for this study is that MVG (Münchner Verkehrsgesellschaft), the local public transport company, has increasingly dedicated itself to becoming an integrated service provider for multimodal transport. In addition to traditional public transport tickets (with passes for visitors for one or several days and, of course, web- and app-based real-time online information), the MVG has decided to complement the existing offer of the U-Bahn rapid transit system, trams and buses (the S-Bahn commuter rail in Munich is run by Deutsche Bahn and not the MVG) with other intermodal transport options. In autumn 2015, the MVG started its own bike-sharing programme called MVG-Rad. With about 1,200 bikes in central parts of the city, the city hopes to significantly broaden its transport options (Heipp, 2015). MVG-Rad combines fixed docking stations (= station-based bike-sharing, or SBBS, mainly at tram stops and U-Bahn- stations) with free-floating bike-sharing (FFBS). Free-floating bike-sharing means that each bike is equipped with a real-time built-in GPS, so that it can be tracked at any time (Pal, Zhang, 2015).

MVG has also developed a new app, ‘MVG more’, which enables customers to find the next available bike with ease – whether it is located at a fixed docking station or simply on the side of a street (Kärgel, 2015) – and to book it. This new service has been intensely marketed to the local population and demand has been higher than the MVG expected (even if no exact data is available at the moment).

Apart from bike sharing, the MVG also cooperates with different carsharing companies and organisations. The (station-based or free-floating) cars are also integrated in the ‘MVG more’, and the real-time availability of cars is shown on the map for booking (see Figure 6). Additionally, taxi stands and car rental stations are shown on the map.

In sum, the MVG is gradually developing from a traditional public transport company towards a hub for multimodal mobility options with the ‘MVG more’ app as the central communication tool (see Figure 7).



Figure 6: Screenshot of real-time availability of multimodal mobility options (desktop version) Source: carsharing.mvg-mobil.de/



Figure 7: One app for multimodal mobility options Source: Kärgerl 2015

5 Tourist mobility patterns in Munich

In light of the comprehensive public transport network in Munich, which tourists have perceived quite positively (Le-Klähn, Hall, Gerike, 2014), it is not astonishing that most of the visitors have used one or several means of public transport (see Figure 8). Even though almost 30% of the visitors arrived by private car, very few used it during their stay in Munich – another indicator of the quality of the public transport system (of course, this cannot be disaggregated from the question of parking or traffic jams).

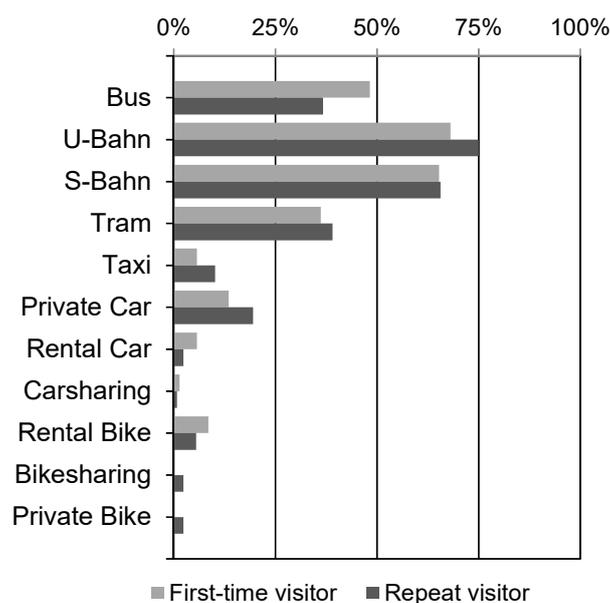


Figure 8: Means of transport used by the tourists (Multiple Responses)

Source: Own survey

As only a few visitors used bike or carsharing (or renting), these transport options still seem to remain a niche market. The extended spatial orientation patterns with visitors entering into gentrified residential neighbourhoods are only reflected to a minor extent by the use of non-public transport means. This might be influenced to a certain extent by the fact that those gentrified neighbourhoods are very well served by U-Bahn and trams in Munich. However, there might also be other reasons for the weak usage of new transport services.

The quality of these services cannot be blamed for the low usage. The satisfaction level with transport means used (see Figure 9) shows that innovative mobility options (this includes bike rental as well as car and bike sharing, as it allows flexible and spontaneous movement in urban surroundings) is higher than the average satisfaction level with all transport means (which are mainly influenced by the large number of evaluations of means of public transport). Users of those transport options gave them above-average ratings in ‘flexibility’ and ‘accessibility’ in particular.

A look at the information search behaviour on mobility options shows that while the internet is the primary source of information of visitors, other traditional information channels still play an important role (see Figure 10). In addition to brochures and apps provided by tourism and transport organisations and companies, the personal word-of-mouth information channel plays an important role. The information given by the private hosts – whether friends and relatives at which the visitors are staying or at the accommodation – are as important as printed information or mobile services.

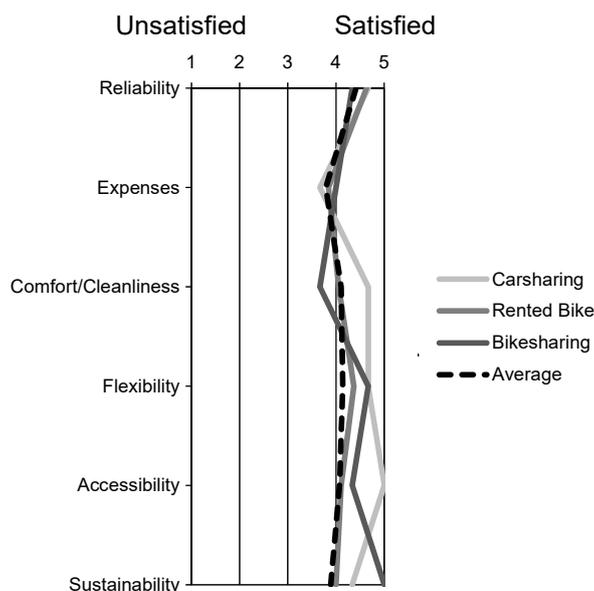


Figure 9: Evaluation of sharing mobility options (average = all modes)

Source: Own survey

At the same time, an astonishing pattern could be detected: international visitors rely to a significantly greater extent on oral information from the service personnel at their lodging or on printed information. Correspondingly, they use websites and apps significantly less often. As the ‘MVG more’ app serves as the core access point for the use of MVG-Rad and carsharing programmes, this means that the app does not yet fully address the needs of international tourists.

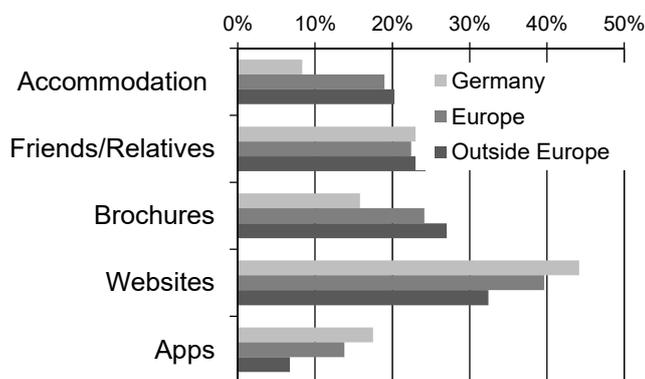


Figure 10: Information on mobility options used by origin (Multiple Responses)

Source: Own survey

The reason for the lack of use of apps is quite simple. Even if the real-time public transport information app is available in English, the ‘MVG more’ app exists only in German. This corresponds with the fact that none of the international tourists interviewed used MVG-Rad or carsharing during their visit in Munich.

A service that only caters to a German-speaking demographic reveals that the MVG is still in one respect quite traditional: it still sees the inhabitants of Munich as its only

source market and neglects the interests of non-German speaking people on a temporary visit to Munich.

An additional undercover test conducted by the students revealed another symptomatic aspect. Pretending to be tourists in Munich, the students approached the personnel at the counters of the service centres of the MVG, asking about any possibilities to use a bike to discover Munich. In no case was the possibility to register for MVG-Rad offered. Instead, the undercover guests were directed to traditional bike rental companies. This is another indicator that the service personnel at the customer interface is not yet sufficiently aware of the intended changes of the MVG from a mere public transport company towards an integrated multimodal service provider.

6 Conclusions

In the last couple of years, there has been an ongoing discussion on New Urban Tourism among tourism scientists. One of the core aspects in this discussion is the supposed blurring of the everyday and leisure, which has consequences for spatial orientation patterns. The leading assumption of this article has been that this approach has to be linked with the discussions on the 'New Mobilities Paradigm' and that it is therefore possible to hypothesise that temporary visitors (for leisure as well as educational or professional reasons) have become an increasingly relevant target group for urban mobility services.

The empirical findings on tourists in Munich showed that, even though some traces of New Urban Tourism behaviour could be identified, this type of spatial behaviour pattern still only represents a small niche segment of the tourism market. At the same time, it was nevertheless possible to identify new mobility patterns to a certain extent as well; these are fostered by corresponding offers of bike and carsharing services from the local mobility service provider.

One crucial challenge for tourism information and mobility service providers will continue to be the need to provide effective communication, which reaches the visitor before or just after arriving at the destination. This is a classic tourism market communication weak point, but its ubiquity does not cancel out its importance. A visitor's understanding about how to move during his or her stay is shaped in a very short period of time. Apart from the evident weakness of the language barrier, which has not been taken sufficiently into account by the local actors, the study revealed the importance of trusted recommendations (formal and non-formal) for the shaping of mobility patterns. So apart from the necessity to cope with language barriers, tourism and transport service providers who want to effectively reach visitors should place greater emphasis on integrating possible hosts into their communication strategy. If they rise to meet the communication challenge, they could contribute to stimulating a broader spatial activity pattern and thus reducing overcrowding in main tourism areas.

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