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ON THE ROAD TO A FARE-FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF THE WROCLAW ANARCHIST FEDERATION

*Na drodze do polityki bezpłatnego transportu publicznego: studium przypadku
Wrocławskiej Federacji Anarchistycznej*

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Abstract: "Climate Alarm", a position of Wrocław public authorities, is an official recognition of issues linked to global climate changes highlighting the position of urban transport development on the sustainable development agenda. Wrocław Anarchists Federation (WAF) has entered the debate over the further trajectory of the city by proposing the fare-free public transport policy (FFPT) as an instrument supporting the new path presented with the "Climate Alarm." As the FFPT is being implemented for various reasons, this study uses the content and discourse analyses to explore not only the framing of the FFPT campaign but also how the call for FFPT adoption is set in motion. The WAF sees the FFPT as sustainable transport innovation, and their campaign is suitable for explaining the ecological and social rationale of the FFPT. However, it is not enough to shift the public discourse and mobilize public authorities to consider the FFPT as an option.

Key words: fare-free public transport policy, FFPT, urban social movement, transport development, Wrocław

1. Introduction

At the beginning of December 2019, the Wrocław Anarchists Federation (WAF), an informal social movement, launched their campaign promoting a fare-free public transport policy (FFPT) to support its implementation in Wrocław (Federacja Anarchistyczna Wrocław, 2019). This was done in response to the "Climate Alarm," an official position adopted on the 16th October 2019 by city authorities (Moch, 2019), which recognizes climate change as a threat to the city and defines the goal to make Wrocław a zero-emission city by 2050. In the initial call to "Free Public Transport," the official name of the campaign for fare-free public transport implementation, the WAF proposes that such an instrument will reduce the negative externalities of car use and demands from the city representative and public transport provider specific steps leading to fare abolition. Along with that, the movement also invites all citizens and experts to demand the same to shift transport and urban development in Wrocław, which is in line with the state of "Climate Alarm". Such an act might be understood as an attempt to challenge current transport planning practices and is relevant for further examination. As noted by W. Kęłowski (2023), E. A. Vasconcellos (2014) and S. Farmer (2011), currently, the planning of public transport provision is being done within a close circle of urban elites separated from its users or workers. WAF proposes to change this dynamic and thus invites, among others, transport and urban geography research to investigate how a new form of mobilities, of which FFPT is a part, are set in motion (Jonas, 2015; Ryghaug et al., 2020) and subsequently contribute to the political geography of urban conflicts (Kohler, Wissen, 2003; Verloo, 2018).

Following the understanding of F. J. Schuurman (1989), M. F. Souza (2006), Mayer (2006) or T. Sager (2016), the WAF could be recognized as an urban social movement (USM) as it challenges ongoing planning practises in a given locality and invites other actors to joint actions. The literature recognizes that USM, among others, are possible triggers (DeVerteuil, Golubchikov, 2016; Barajas, 2018; Clayton, 2018; Kęłowski, Bassens, 2018; Köhler et al., 2019; Polak et al., 2020) causing the change in the trajectories of urban (Lopéz, 2012; Bunce, 2016) or transport (Nixon, Schwanen, 2018; Enright, 2019; Sunio et al., 2021) development with growing role in in the sustainability transition of not only transport, but also other fields like energy, housing, or food systems (Lopéz, 2012; Thomson, 2015; Köhler et al., 2019). Such a shift in a prevailing development might occur as USMs are contesting the business-as-usual of public authorities via various campaigns which put on display concrete issues (Aldred, 2013; Piotrowski, Wennerhag, 2015; Balkmar, Summerton,

2017; Williams, 2018; Sunio et al., 2021) and also via designing and implementing specific instruments which address them (von Schneidmesser et al., 2020; Sunio et al., 2020). The "Free Public Transport" is one such an example (Schein, 2011; Aftimus, Santini, 2018; Nygård, 2018; Prince, 2018; Enright, 2019) that USM use to challenge transport planning and lobby for its implementation.

The FFPT, as the name suggests, is a specific policy resulting in fare abolition in the public transport service (Kęłowski, 2020). As the FFPT research successfully expands the list of FFPT municipalities, a growing body of literature that challenges FFPT from various viewpoints arriving at different results that are charted in FFPT research section below. What could be learned from the various investigations of the reasoning underpinning the FFPT implementation is the fact that FFPT policy, although perceived as a transport instrument, is often part of a broader discussion (Brand, 2008; Gale, 2014; Gebaldón-Estevan et al., 2019; Kęłowski, 2018; Kęłowski et al., 2019a) over the future of urbanities and society with FFPT used as an alternative to prevailing neoliberal competition in urban and transport development.

Dudley and Richardson (2000) point out that spatial management policies, of which transport is inherent part, result from the negotiation of various actors with different motives and power. Such policies are thus not created in isolation from the socio-spatial, historical and political background (Siren, Sørensen, 2015) meaning that research should focus on the context in which those policies appear and observe their journey prior to implementation. Unfortunately, current transport geography research prioritizes quantitative analyses of specific problems and their solutions (Marsden, Reardon, 2017; Kęłowski et al., 2019b, 2022) (e.g., socio-spatial implications) and neglects what is happening before particular (transport) policies make it on the agenda – evolving narratives and mechanisms, where qualitative input is needed. This is also symptomatic for FFPT research that mainly focuses on assessment of the policy, ignoring the context how it is brought to the operation.

This study responds to this gap by exploring the "Free Public Transport" campaign to broaden further the debate over the processes on how and by whom transport is planned. Firstly, it aims to uncover how the WAF frames the issue of FFPT and identify the plan's contours on how FFPT should be implemented in practice. Secondly, following the line of disputes over the USM and their capabilities to influence public opinion and planning practises (Snow et al., 2004; Hossain, 2018; Wagner et al., 2019), this study aims to identify mechanisms being used to shape the public discourse on transport planning. After the Introduction,

the article continues with a presentation of FFPT and urban social movement research followed, by Materials and Methods, Results and Conclusion.

2. Exploring the FFPT and urban social movements research

2.1. The FFPT research

The zero-fare policy is central to the WAF “Free Public Transport”, where it is presented as the best solution for transport problems. Unlike WAF, scholars and experts still raise doubts over FFPT’s impact. Although FFPT is present in various localities around the globe (e.g., USA, France, Poland, Brazil, Estonia) (Brown et al., 2003; Fearnley, 2013; Kębłowski, 2020; Štraub, 2019), broad comparative observations are scarce, and current FFPT debate relies on case-studies which comparison is due to various FFPT optimisation problematic.

There is a consensus that FFPT is successful in attracting more people to public transport, with the increased ridership that usually spans from 25-50% (Hodge et al., 1994; Volinski, 2012), but in some cases, the ridership doubled (Aubagne, France (Cats et al., 2014)) or increased by 900 % (Hasselt, Belgium (Brand, 2008)). FFPT initially appeared in the context of growing automobilization, where it was seen as an instrument changing the prevailing modal split. According to the FFPT opponents, the effect in this regard is moderate (e.g., 3 % in Tallinn, Estonia (Cats et al., 2017), 16% in Hasselt, Belgium (van Goeverden, 2006). Cats et al. (2014, 2017), along with Hess (2017), Cools et al. (2016) or Storchmann (2003), add to those claims that the increased ridership is mainly explained by more frequent use from the side of former public transport users or those, who would rather walk or ride a bike.

The research calls for a broader exploration of FFPT, providing contradictive findings. R. Brand (2008), O. Cats et al. (2014, 2017), A. D’Alessandro (2008), Dai et al. (2021) or D. Štraub and V. Jaroš (2019) explored the potential of the FFPT in increasing the public transport effectivity in terms of ridership’s increase or eliminating empty public transport connections during off-peak hours. A. De Witte et al. (2006), M. Friman et al. (2019), S. Fuji and R. Kitamura (2003), G. Inturri et al. (2020), J. Thøgersen (2009), J. Thøgersen and B. Møller (2008) or J. Zhou and L. Schweitzer (2011) found that FFPT disturbs the prevailing individuals’ mobility practises and producing new ones. N. Fearnley (2013), C. Carr and M. Hesse (2020) and K. Grzelec and A. Jagiełło (2020) argue that FFPT is not the best solution for addressing system-wide problems such as car-use externalities. In contrast, R. Brand (2008) pointed out that when FFPT is a part of complex urban and transport development changes, it could reduce the car traffic, as observed

in Hasselt (Netherlands). While the increase in overall public transport ridership is expected after implementing zero-fares, the FFPT’s ability to tackle system-wide transport and urban challenges thus depends on FFPT synergy with other transport (dis)incentives (Cools et al., 2016, Busch-Geertsema et al., 2021).

Ambivalent FFPT outputs question the policy from an economic standpoint. J. S. Perone (2002), J. Volinski (2012) and Z. Tomeš et al. (2022) raise doubts regarding the high costs of FFPT along with growing requirements and demand as the ridership increases. O. Cats et al. (2017) and A. De Witte et al. (2008) oppose that growing ridership may motivate public authorities to find different ways of funding (e.g., public-private partnership, tax collection reform). D. C. Hodge (1994) indicates that fare abolition leads to an absence of expenses connected with fares which in smaller or heavily subsidies systems might result in the same costs of public transport provision. Lastly, the economic-themed debates investigate the profit-oriented setting of public transport and invites to look upon public transport as a public good, similar to parks or libraries (Prince, 2018; Schein, 2011; van Goeverden et al., 2006), linking FFPT with social justice.

A growing body of studies noticed how the fare system unequally limits the mobility options that reinforce other transport-related inequalities (Larabure, 2016; Schein, 2011; Sträuli, Kębłowski, 2022). FFPT is, in this regard, seen as an element how to address those inequalities (Cats et al., 2017; Enright, 2019; Mujcic, Frijters, 2020) and support social justice without limiting day-to-day participation no matter the ethnicity, race, social status, disabilities, age, gender or car possession (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2021). While presented studies follow transport democratisation, W. Kębłowski (2020) and C. Carr and M. Hesse (2020) underline FFPT’s part in political or urban marketing campaigns with intentions different than improving transport justice.

As shown, FFPT is, for various reasons, interesting for a broad spectrum of actors. For public transport operators, it could be the increased ridership, for planning authorities, the improved attractivity of given location, and for urban social movements, it is the social justice layer. Understanding how public discourse is mobilised that allows FFPT to enter the decision-making process is equally important to understanding FFPT outcomes.

2.2. Urban social movements research

The recent findings (Enright, 2019; Farmer, 2011; Kębłowski, 2023) show that transport planning processes are unequal as the decision-making mechanism is only accessible to limited actors. Urban social

movements, in this respect, represent a body aiming to disturb such a power-dynamics that would result in new forms of how transport planning is being exercised (Verloo, 2018; Geels, 2010; Kohler, Wissen, 2003; Benford, Snow, 2000). While forms of these attempts are manifold, a common element is to shape public approaches, attitudes, or planning practices in given problematics.

The research of USM is, in this respect, diverse. Some studies are interested in understanding the motivation of their action. G. Piotrowski and M. Wennerhag (2015), for example, analyse motives and actions of Polish and Swedish left-libertarian activists and how they interact with politics. Similarly, L. Vivanco (2013) and Z. Furness (2010) investigates what underpins the rise of bicycle activism. Different approaches are present by E. Verlinghieri and F. Venturini (2018), where the triggers of the movements are hidden behind a wide exploration of main discourses articulated by two Brazilian movements or in the case of biking activism in England (Aldred, 2013). A wider investigation offers A. Nygård (2018), who maps the history of Planka.nu, USM that lobbies for the FFPT in Sweden.

In terms of methodology, the wide array of explorations usually appears in the form of case and comparative studies using various approaches and frameworks to collect and interpret data. Besides the interviews, surveys or observations, the research also

uses available materials (e.g., texts, photos, videos) distributed via various movements to promote their activities (Enright, 2019; Balkmar, Summerton, 2017; Aldred, 2013; Ross et al., 2012). Such a promotion is crucial for urban social movements because clear articulation of their action is critical for the identification that enables others to recognize the USM (Snow, Benford, 1992; Benford, 2013) and to decide whether or not to join their calls. Both content and discourse analyses are in this regard useful (Wodak, 2013) as it helps understand how certain USM could shape given social reality.

To uncover how discourses are being formed, the framework of epistemic communities is being used (Haas, 1992). However, as suggested by A. Wagner et al. (2019), more agents are centralised around given discourse(s) with various goals and practices to publicly share their knowledge and mobilize others, which P. M. Haas (1992) overlooked. Analyses of discursive practices (Wagner et al., 2019) offer to fill this gap by focusing on three ideal types of discursive groups – epistemic communities, communities of practice and interest groups. This distinction is based on their goals and activities (Tab. 1), which could lead to a better understanding of how USM as such are being shaped and uncovers their potential and limitation to mobilize the public, experts, and policy planners to shift development strategies (Snow et al., 2004).

Tab. 1. Types of discursive group.

	Epistemic communities	Communities of practise	Interest groups
Objectives	Long term: <i>influencing public policy</i> (outward)	Change in one <i>group's practises</i> (inward)	Short term: <i>influencing particular legal regulations</i> while securing one's group interests (inward)
Basis of self-consciousness	Actors are <i>organised around discourses</i> , do not feel members of one community	Actors feel like <i>members of a community</i> organised around shared experiences of their daily life	Actors are <i>connected by common interests</i> and are conscious of that
Resources	<i>Scientific knowledge</i> , authority of scientific institutions	<i>Practical knowledge</i> , common knowledge, practises, values, emotions, people's experiences	<i>Scientific and practical knowledge</i> (selective)
Rules of validation	Methodology <i>accepted in scientific milieu</i>	<i>Usefulness</i> , Interpersonal trust	<i>Effectiveness</i> , being in accordance with group values and interests
Public visibility of discourse	Particularly important, <i>desired</i>	Not important	<i>Context dependent</i> : sometimes important, sometimes not desired
Constructed knowledge	The hegemonic "episteme" – <i>universal longstanding knowledge</i>	"Techne" – contextual, variable dependent <i>knowledge on how to do something</i>	"Phronesis" – the judgment of values and interests, <i>knowledge of "what is good for us"</i>

Source: Wagner et al. (2019).

3. Materials and methods

The research work is divided into four main stages. In the first stage, it was necessary to identify the topics which interest the WAF and the exact date when the WAFs' campaign to promote the FFPT policy started. Knowing that the WAF actively reports on its activities via its own web page, qualitative content analyses (QCA) was conducted (Krippendorff, 2019). The QCA covered a 6-year period which marks the time between the firstly published post (27.5.2015) till 19.8.2021. The database containing the published date, title, type and key topic with the covered location of the post was created in this step.

Second, discourse analyses which is being commonly used in urban social movement research as demonstrated in the previous section was used to understand how WAF frames the issue of FFPT policy. The fare-free public transport policy has many forms and is being used for several reasons (Hess, 2017), thus it is essential for this study to see how the WAF shapes the FFPT in its campaign. For that, this study recognizes four main rationales, namely the environmental, social, economic and educational, which the FFPT research has thus far identified (Fearnley, 2013; Kębłowski, 2020; Štraub, Jaroš, 2019). Having this in mind, the context in which FFPT appeared was studied to understand the underlying meaning of the FFPT campaign. The discourse analyses are applied to all articles and posts published by WAF at their web page, Facebook and Twitter account and is linked to the FFPT campaign and covers a three-year period between 9.12.2019 and 19.8.2021. Additional materials identified during the research, such as podcasts or recordings from debates, were also analysed.

Third, using the A. Wagner et al. (2019) framework of discursive groups is used to analyse the discursive practises of WAF's FFPT campaign. Similarly like in the previous steps, the article and materials connected with the FFPT campaign published at the webpage is used as a main source of data.

Fourth, after providing a complete picture of the FFPT campaign of the WAF, a comparison with other USMs, who also promote the idea of zero-fares follows. This comparison allows for the better understanding of FFPT campaigns and has the potential to uncover weak links in FFPT mobilization and adoption.

4. Results

4.1. Who & Why – Is it all about the climate alarm?

Wroclaw Anarchists Federation is an informal association of people based in Wroclaw whose main aim is spreading the idea of anarchism and challenging social

inequalities underpinned by the state bureaucratic machine, law and capitalism (Federacja Anarchistyczna Wroclaw, 2021). Analyses of 146 articles published on WAF's web page between 27.5.2015 – 19.8.2021 shows various themes (n=62) that the movements cover. While some topics pop up on the agenda haphazardly (e.g. immigration or animal rights), others are being systematically developed, including fare-free public transport policy (other main themes: police brutality, women's rights, abortion and local urban policy).

The FFPT campaign is WAF's recent activity. While it is not the most commonly frequented topic (9 articles VS 17 police brutality, 32, women's rights and abortion), only the fare-free campaign has dedicated space within WAF's web page where the campaign is presented. It must be also taken into consideration that FFPT posts were published in a shorter period compared to other topics. It is clear that the campaign is perceived as an important topic from the beginning, rather than some occasional issue.

As stated in the introduction, "Free Public Transport" appears in connection with the "Climate Alarm," which was declared by public authorities in Wroclaw in October 2019 (Moch, 2019). The "Climate Alarm" resolution is linked to the problems of climate change caused, among others, by a rising level of CO₂ emission and defines goals to reduce their level. This could suggest that the leading FFPT campaign narrative will evolve around FFPT's ability to address environmental issues – excessive use of cars, growing congestion and air pollution. While this is true for the start of the campaign, where FFPT is seen as an ecological policy to motivate drivers to use public transport more, lower traffic jams and improve air quality, a new narrative pops up with the covid-19 outbreak underlining health and social justice issues (Tab. 2). The WAF notes that although it is generally recommended for people to work from home, not everyone has the possibility to do so. The movement, thus, makes the point that there are still groups of people who have no choice but to use public transport. The FFPT policy is suggested as an instrument of solidarity and social justice. In addition, implementing the fare-free scheme in public transport is also a measure of how minimize the risk of spreading the virus as people will not pile up next to ticket machines or riders, and ticket controllers with drivers will not endanger their health due to contact with others. The last narrative is economic. WAF underlines that covid-19 pandemic showed that public transport could also work in times with drastically reduced farebox revenue. The movement calls that public transport should not be treated like a private company focusing on profit and criticizes Wroclaw authorities' plans to increase fares.

Tab. 2. "Free Public Transport" narratives.

Rationale	Quotation
Environment	"Fare-free public transport is the only solution to a congested and polluted city (...)." [WAF]
Environment and health	"Our health is the best argument here. Every day, breathing in the exhaust fumes of hundreds of cars driven by individuals, is a day destroying our lungs and our whole body. We appeal for the introduction of Free Public Transport in the city! (...)" [WAF]
Social justice	"None of the controllers endanger their health at work. Ticket machines, payment terminals and cash registers are hotspots for bacteria and viruses, so it is not advisable to use them (...)." [WAF]
Health	
Economy	"Public transport is not a company, it is a service that should serve to all residents (...)." [WAF]

Source: Own elaboration.

4.2. Discursive practises

The framework of discursive groups (Wagner et al., 2019) is the departure point to understanding the mechanisms WAF uses in the FFPT campaign. According to the campaign’s objectives, WAF fits under the epistemic communities as the movement’s intention is not to change standards or regulations within a close group of actors (e.g., changing regulation only for public transport workers) but to shift transport development trajectory as a whole.

The "Free Public Transport" is a crucial trademark used to unite actors in the campaign. It is important that WAF mobilizes people around FFPT narratives that are separated from other WAF activities, as those might be seemed problematic for people with different

attitudes. Given that other and more frequented topics are blurred among other themes, the dedicated FFPT webpage is good practice for attempting to draw a line between WAF and FFPT campaign. The FFPT webpage is not the only action WAF conducted to keep the FFPT campaign alive. In addition, WAF used the moment when the public authorities discussed a fare increase to promote the FFPT campaign via banners, blockade of ticket machines or public demonstration of transport nodes in Wrocław (Fig. 1, B, C, D) along with distributing leaflets explaining the rationale of fare-free public transport policy. Naturally, all the steps in the FFPT campaign are shared via social media channels to increase public outreach.



Fig. 1. FFPT campaign.

Source: Own elaboration.

While public visibility and clear articulation of the campaign is crucial for catching the attention at the start and keeping it alive in the public debate, later on, it is not enough to disturb the prevailing status quo. As indicated in the discursive group framework (Wagner et al., 2019), for epistemic communities is essential to demonstrate how the campaign responds to the actual needs and problems. Here, the attempts could be better. WAF conducted its survey in Polish FFPT municipalities (Fig. 1, A) to show where it works and how, the drawback is a missing link to how this experience could address the situation in Wrocław. Although WAF can identify the transport development problem, they fail to highlight its relevance by providing solid evidence of how significant the problem is and how FFPT answer it. Subsequently, neglection from experts and public authorities throughout the campaign question campaigns validity.

4.3. Wrocław – Stockholm – Rio de Janeiro

As it is true that the FFPT is a uniform idea which takes different forms, the same goes for the manifestation of the FFPT policy by various movements. Diverse causes and challenges, whereby the FFPT might be a solution, also influence how the FFPT campaign looks. The WAF is not the only USM that promotes or lobbies for the FFPT implementation, as illustrated, for example, in Canada (Schein, 2011; Prince, 2018), Brazil (Aftimus, Santini, 2018) or Sweden (Nygård, 2018). The previous chapters show the FFPT campaign of the WAF, which, at the time of writing, is absent in the debate. The following section presents other movements of the FFPT campaign, specifically still ongoing at Planka.nu (Stockholm, Sweden) and discontinued at the Forum de Lutas (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and compares actions and plans with the WAF, keeping in mind the discursive group framework (Wagner et al., 2019) demonstrated in Tab. 3 that closes this section.

Planka.nu is an existing network of organizations in Stockholm County and the Gothenburg area promoting the FFPT. The network itself was founded by the Swedish Anarcho-Syndicalist Youth Federation as a reaction to the growing fares in Stockholm in 2000 (Planka.nu, 2022). However, the growing fares were only one of the reasons giving rise to Planka.nu. As A. Nygård (2018) pointed out, Stockholm's characteristic feature during that time was segregation, where better-off people lived in the inner city, while the suburbs were for poor people for whom public transport provided the fundamental connection to the city centre. Thus, the fare rise was negatively perceived by those with no other option to participate in day-to-day activities other than by public transport. This relates to the fact that even before the

fare level was raised, fare evasion had been a shared practice at an individual level (Sterner, Sheng, 2013). Another reasoning underpinning the Planka.nu FFPT campaign is their belief that similarly to pavements, routes or elevators, public transport is a fundamental part of the urban-land nexus and should be financed from taxes (Sterner, Sheng, 2013; Nygård, 2018). Fare dodging anticipated as an individual problem, quickly became a common practice and a political topic. Although the motives of Planka.nu and WAF differ, both movements use similar strategies (a website, social media, banners, posters, stickers or demonstrations) to make their FFPT campaign visible and separated from other movement activities to articulate their main aims clearly. However, it must be noticed that WAF did not attempt to legitimize fare evasion, which in the case of Planka.nu is the core activity catching most of the attention. Moreover, it is not only because of the act itself but also due to the foundation of "P-Kassan," a solidarity fund to which all members pay a monthly fee to cover possible fines (Planka.nu, 2022). The activities of Planka.nu might be perceived as more thought-through compared to WAF. It is not only the solidarity fund, a demonstration of practical solutions to fare spikes being used in practice, but also various reports covering the problems of (local) transport and the urban system, which improves Planka.nu credibility. Contesting the fare in public transport in the case of Planka.nu not only comes in the form of a fight against the system but also by implementing concrete solutions and an evidence-based approach.

The Forum de Lutas is the urban social movement from Rio de Janeiro, which follows the idea of the Free Pass Movement (Movimento Passe Livre), a Brazilian social movement advocating FFPT, which emerged during the protest in 2013 related to the fare increase (Aftimus, Santini, 2018). The fact that the Forum de Lutas followed the tradition of the Free Pass Movement helped with the recognition of the campaign, and there was no need to devote resources for the Forum de Lutas brand building, unlike in Wrocław or Stockholm. Similarly, to the case of Planka.nu, also in Rio de Janeiro, fare spikes triggered the campaign, but not primarily for its exclusionary character, although the movement also contests this layer, but mainly for degrading public transport quality that does not correspond with the fare increase (Verlinghieri, Venturini, 2018). E. Verlinghieri and F. Venturini (2018) also noted that planning authorities did not recognize the fare increase as substantially significant, thus, not worsening the situation of those dependent on public transport. Such an understanding of the fare change was in sharp contrast with the views of the Forum de Lutas, which saw the increase as another mechanism reinforcing inequalities in socio-spatial segregation,

a trend well documented and common in Rio De Janeiro (de Carvalho, Pereira, 2011; Pereira, 2018; Pereira et al., 2019). Resentment with the fare spikes fuelled by the low-quality public transport system and the exploitation of drivers, who were also responsible for the fare collection, resulted in social protests against the trajectory on which the public transport development in Rio de Janeiro was settled (Verlinghieri, Venturini, 2018), strategies well known from other urban social movements. The FFPT was being demanded and seen as an element of broader changes in the public transport system to reduce socio-spatial inequalities, not vice versa. Although the Forum de Lutas succeeded in stopping the fare level increase and pushed public authorities to investigate further the public transport tariff scheme (Verlinghieri, Venturini, 2018), the FFPT was not adopted, and the ongoing transport investment is poorly improving the opportunities and accessibility of those who need it most (Pereira, 2018; Pereira et al., 2019; Boisjoly et al., 2020).

a case study. This study investigates by whom and how specific (not only) transport policies, such as the FFPT, are set in motion, an emerging field of growing critical urban transport studies (Marsden, Reardon, 2017; Kębłowski et al., 2019b; Carr, Hesse, 2020) and contributes to political geography of urban conflicts (Kohler, Wissen, 2003; Kębłowski, 2023). The ecological argumentation in the FFPT campaign, where the focus is put on the possibilities of the FFPT to mitigate negative externalities connected with excessive car use and, in this case, a direct response to “Climate Alarm” (Moch, 2019), continuously shifted towards understanding and promoting the FFPT as an essential element of transition towards more socially just urban and transport planning practises. According to Kębłowski (2020), it is how the FFPT should be seen, which sets a good example for other movements or policy-authorities. The WAF advocates for making up the pace in the sustainable transition and positions itself as a possible source of sustainable (transport) innovation.

Tab. 3. Comparison of USM.

	<i>Epistemic communities</i>	WAF	Planka.nu	Forum de Lutas
Objectives	<i>Long term: influencing public policy (outward)</i>	Implement FFPT policy		
Basis of self-consciousness	<i>Actors are organised around discourses, do not feel members of one community</i>	FFPT discourse(s)		
		Environment Social justice Health Economy	Social justice Economy	Social justice
Resources	<i>Scientific knowledge, authority of scientific institutions</i>	FFPT survey	Reports	–
Rules of validation	<i>Methodology accepted in scientific milieu</i>	Unsystematic	Evidence-based approach, implemented solution (“P-Kassan” solidarity fund”)	Unsystematic
Public visibility of discourse	<i>Particularly important, desired</i>	Webpage and social media campaign, protest, banners	Webpage and social media campaign, banners, protest	Protests, public assemblies, banners
Constructed knowledge	<i>The hegemonic “episteme” – universal longstanding knowledge</i>	Social justice		

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of Wagner et al. (2019).

5. Conclusions

The campaign to implement the FFPT of the Wrocław Anarchist Federation in Wrocław is being used as

Using A. Wagners et al. (2019) triple model of discursive practices allows us to understand the various actions of the WAF FFPT campaign but limits the study from a more profound understanding of the

campaign failure, although the comparison with other movements sketches a possible explanation. All the movements use similar strategies to articulate their motives and keep the discourse alive in the public debate, with a slight distinction of Forum De Lutas, which focuses mainly on on-site activities. In contrast, WAF and Planka.nu is also active in the online sphere. All these are common mechanisms USMs adopt to mobilise people around specific problems (e.g., Nygård, 2018; Verlinghieri, Venturini, 2018) and maintain desired visibility. While WAF can identify problems, absent evidence of how FFPT could address them and neglect from the expert community may be a possible reason why the campaign has not reached any significant milestones which undermines WAF's credibility. This is not the case with Forum de Lutas, which created substantial pressure to stop the fare spikes or, in the case of Planka.nu implemented a concrete, although a partial, solution to prevailing problems. Additionally, looking at the mechanism used in USMs campaigns through the lens of A. Wagner et al. (2019) suggests, whether the respective movement is inclined more towards protest-oriented (Forum de Lutas) or knowledge-oriented tradition (Planka.nu) (Verlinghieri, Venturini, 2018). WAF, in this regard, seems to be somewhere in the middle and partially explains why the "Free Public Transport" campaign is without any outcomes.

The comparison showed that all the selected urban social movements use FFPT not as a final destination, where public transport development should arrive at, but rather as a trigger causing more fundamental changes in transport and urban development. It supports a more environmentally friendly transport and urban system and tends to diminish societal inequalities hidden and reinforced in transport poverty. What, however, distinguishes the movements of FFPT campaigns, is their framing of problems. While the environmental argumentation hinged the WAF campaign from the start and later touched the issue of public transport financing and social inequalities connected with Covid-19 restrictions, it lacks strong rhetoric identified in the case of Planka.nu and the Forum de Lutas, where fares are seen as a tool reinforcing socio-spatial segregation and FFPT as an essential element of its solution.

The existence of movements like WAF, Planka.nu or the Forum de Lutas are important, not only because of their ability to highlight issues of current systems, which for example in the case of fares are one of the elements reinforcing socio-spatial segregation (Knowles, 1993; Lucas, 2019), but also because of their ability to propose new alternatives. The FFPT is one such opportunity inviting to think about the ongoing sustainable transition in an out-of-the-box

as it challenges not only effectivity of transport instruments, but also political issues connected with wealth distribution, taxation and related power-dynamics.

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