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### **REVIEW: J. DELLHEIM, J. PRINCE (EDS.) – FREE PUBLIC TRANSIT: AND WHY WE DON'T PAY TO RIDE ELEVATORS, BLACK ROSE BOOKS, MONTREAL, 2018; 250 PP.**

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The topic of abolished fares in public transport stays at the minority of the transport and mobility research. Thus, it is essential that the first English language book entitled *Free Public Transit: And Why Don't We Pay to Ride Elevators* has been published to enhance both the academic and public debate around the topic. The book editors J. Dellheim and J. Prince have curated a selection of 19 articles that portraits the topic of free public transit, or fare-free public transport policy (FFPT), as it prevails in the mainstream FFPT research from different perspectives. In total, 20 chapters represent a valuable reference point for any researchers, public authorities, activists, students or citizens who want to get familiar with or further broaden their knowledge in the topic of free public transport.

As noted in the book introduction, the chapters are arranged (besides the first three chapters) to respect the chronological order of events related to the worldwide FFPT debate and practises. This review, however, emphasizes various thematic blocs to ease the orientation of the potential reader. Such themes are centred around fare-free public transport policy introduction (chapter 1.), a sketch of the FFPT landscape in various countries (chapter 8., 12., 13., 14.), plenty of case studies focusing on the broader transport planning practises (chapter 4., 6., 7., 9. 17.) or social

movements (chapter 5., 10., 11., 15.) which underpin the FFPT debate or implementation and general issues of urban planning (chapter 2., 3., 16., 19. and 20.).

The first chapter, entitled *Scope and definition* (W. Kębłowski), is essential for a reader who is not familiar with the fare-free public transport policy. It explains various public transport schemes which runs under the fare-free principles and shows worldwide examples of the FFPT systems, which some of them are in detail described later in the book. Besides that, the reader will also understand the changing rationale which supports the FFPT development.

Important theme-bloc represents chapters that display the rise of FFPT practises in different countries all around the world. For example, L. Ługowski, in the chapter *Poland: Take Your Potted Plant To Town*, pictures the injustice between car drivers and public transport users and emphasize the motivation to improve citizens' welfare as a trigger to introduce the fare-free principles in several municipalities across Poland. Similarly, the clash between car-oriented development and socially and environmentally just transport system is described in the FFPT cases in Germany (J. Dellheim – *Germany: Europe's Car Country is Turning on its Head*) and Greece (G. Daremas – *Greece: Automobiles or Public Transport*).

Valuable insight provides case studies that document the shift in the transport planning paradigm of which fare-free public transport is essential. This is well demonstrated in the chapter devoted to one of the first success story of the FFPT project in Bologna (Italy) in 1973 (M. Jäggi – Traffic Policy: “Free Fares Were Just The Beginning”) or later in the case of Hasselt (Netherlands) where the discontinued fare-free schemes give rise to new urban and transport planning practises putting the highest priority to public transport and active modes of travel (M. Brie – Belgium: Ending the Car Siege in Hasselt). This section also covers the well-known case of Tallin (Estonia), where the mayor of the capital explains the history and the prospects of the FFPT programme (A. Alaküla – Tallinn: Estonia Leads The Way With Free Public Transit). The journey of the fare-free public transport policy in Aubagne (France) is yet another example of how the FFPT policy is used as a policy highlighting inter-municipal solidarity instead of the neoliberal competition which prevails in current urban and transport planning practices (W. Kębłowski – France: A “New May 1968” in Aubagne). Similarly, the three fare-free programmes from Chengdu (China) are shown as a complex alternative policy challenging the car-centric development in Chinese metropolis (W. Kębłowski – Riding for Free in Chinese Metropolis).

The last section devoted solely to fare-free public transport policy describes the various bottom-up initiatives which advocate for the FFPT adoption. The entire history of the local activist’s movement Planka.nu is outlined in the chapter Planka.nu: Jumping Turnstiles in Sweden (A. Nygård), whose campaigns and protest connected with fare increases, shortly became a part of the broader call to shift towards a just society. The same motives are present also in the case of social movement in Montreal, which related to investments in Olympic Games instead of resident’s welfare (J. Prince – Jamming Fare Boxes in Montreal) or Toronto, where the campaign was connected with the fare increase (H. Rosenfeld – Challenging the Impossible: Toronto). P. Aftimus, together with D. Santini in the chapter Brazil: From Dream to Nightmare documents from the late 1970s onwards how protests and campaigns in favour of fare-free public transport policy, in particular under the umbrella of national movement Movimento Pass Livre, are part of a broader call to social reform not only on the transport sector but also in health and education.

Besides FFPT, some chapters cover and criticize general transport development practices. The Transport Spectrum: Vectors of Change (J. Scheurer) focuses on new development in transport and transport technologies and considers its possible impact on public transport development. The Political Economy of Transport (J. Delheim) emphasizes the interplay

between mobility and transport, criticizes how the automotive sector is embodied within current economic and political structures and expose the technical and behavioural barriers which must be passed in terms of making the needed shift to more socially and environmentally fair society. L. Zárate in The Right to The City in Mexico describes on the background of the urban and population growth of Mexico City the evolution of the Right to The City Charter, including the Right to The Mobility in Mexico, which is an example of social and transport planning reform in practice supporting the sustainable development. Right before the Concluding remarks, J. Scheurer (Value Capture: Linking Public Transport to Land Value) evaluates current practices in western developed cities to collect finances for the public transport services operating from other sources than fares and general revenue of the government. Notably, the author does not stay only with a criticism of the practices but also introduces a new approach to how towns could monetize the added value of properties benefiting from the good accessibility to public transport, which could be enough to stop fare collection and support the fare-free scheme implementation.

The takeaway message of the last chapter, the Concluding remarks, and the book itself is to not understand the fare-free public transport as the only win solution to our current transport problems. Rather than that, it documents throughout the chapters that the FFPT is an essential instrument of urban and transport development, which may be at the start of social and environmental reform and might cause a change in the planning practises.

The book focuses on various aspects of the fare-free transport policies documented in various cases worldwide. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the focus on the Global North FFPT cases slightly prevails. Also, as this review introduction indicates, the wide range of perspectives on how to look at the fare-free public transport problematics is an asset of this book. By reading it, transport geographers and experts could uncover the diverse world of minor transport policy, which emphasizes not only the environmental element of sustainable development but also the economic and social one and promises that the transition to environmentally and socially just society is possible if we overcome the embedded barriers of prevailing transport development paradigm. Yet, what should be considered as a downside is a lack of vital critical voices towards the FFPT policy. The author of this review thinks it is the missing puzzle that might help scholars and transport experts expand their understanding of the fare-free scheme even more, which will benefit both the academic disputes and practice.

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