

# Fare-Free Public Transport International experiences

**From Low Fares to No Fares:  
An Analysis of Economic, Operational, Socio-Spatial and Political Dynamics  
of  
Fare-Free Public Transport**



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# FFPT – variety of practices and contexts

- Not a uniform policy
- An emerging issue in the public debate
- Growing popularity – ca. 275 cases
- Highly context dependent

- Variety in:



Spatial scales



Network complexity

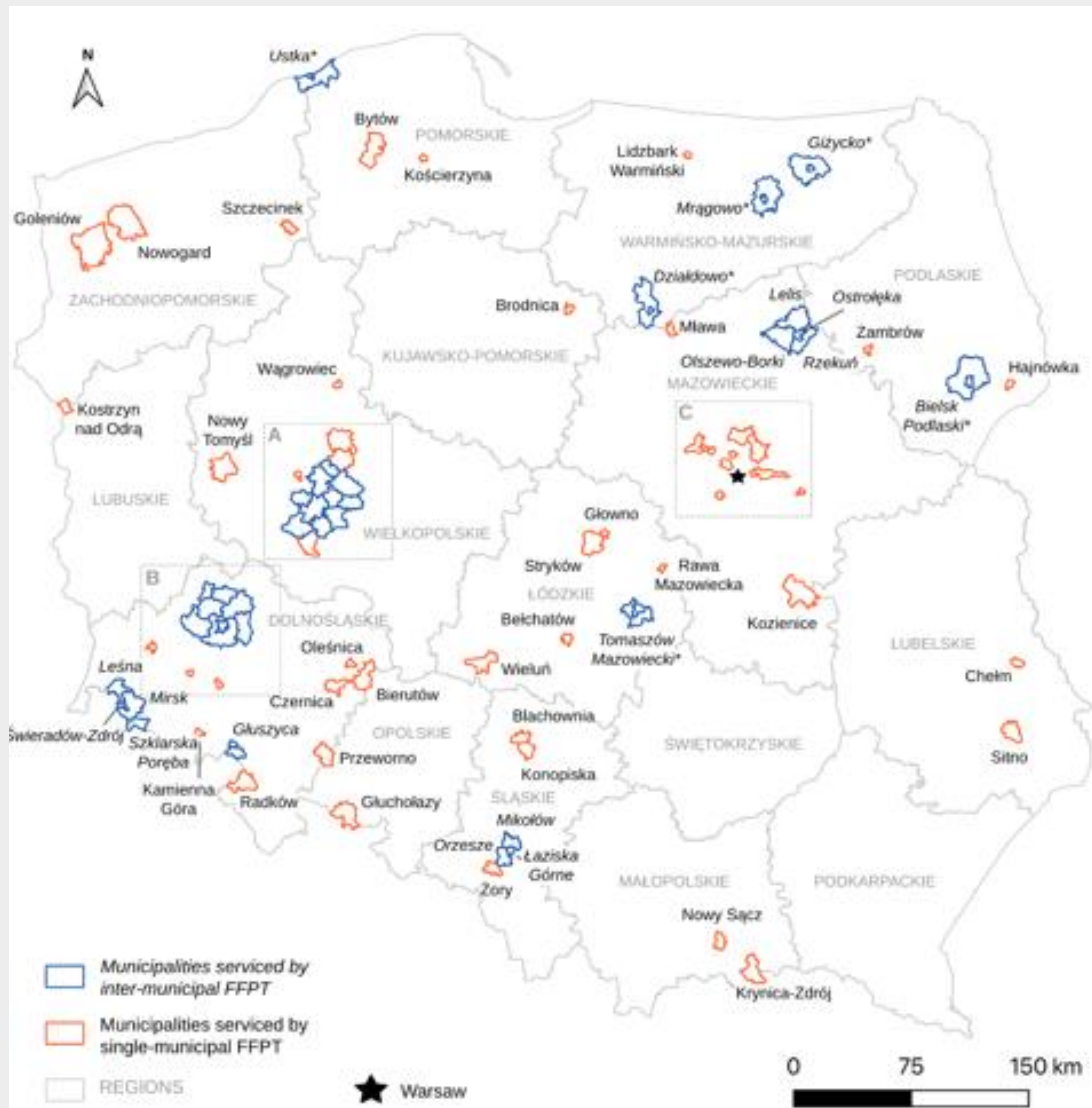


Population coverage



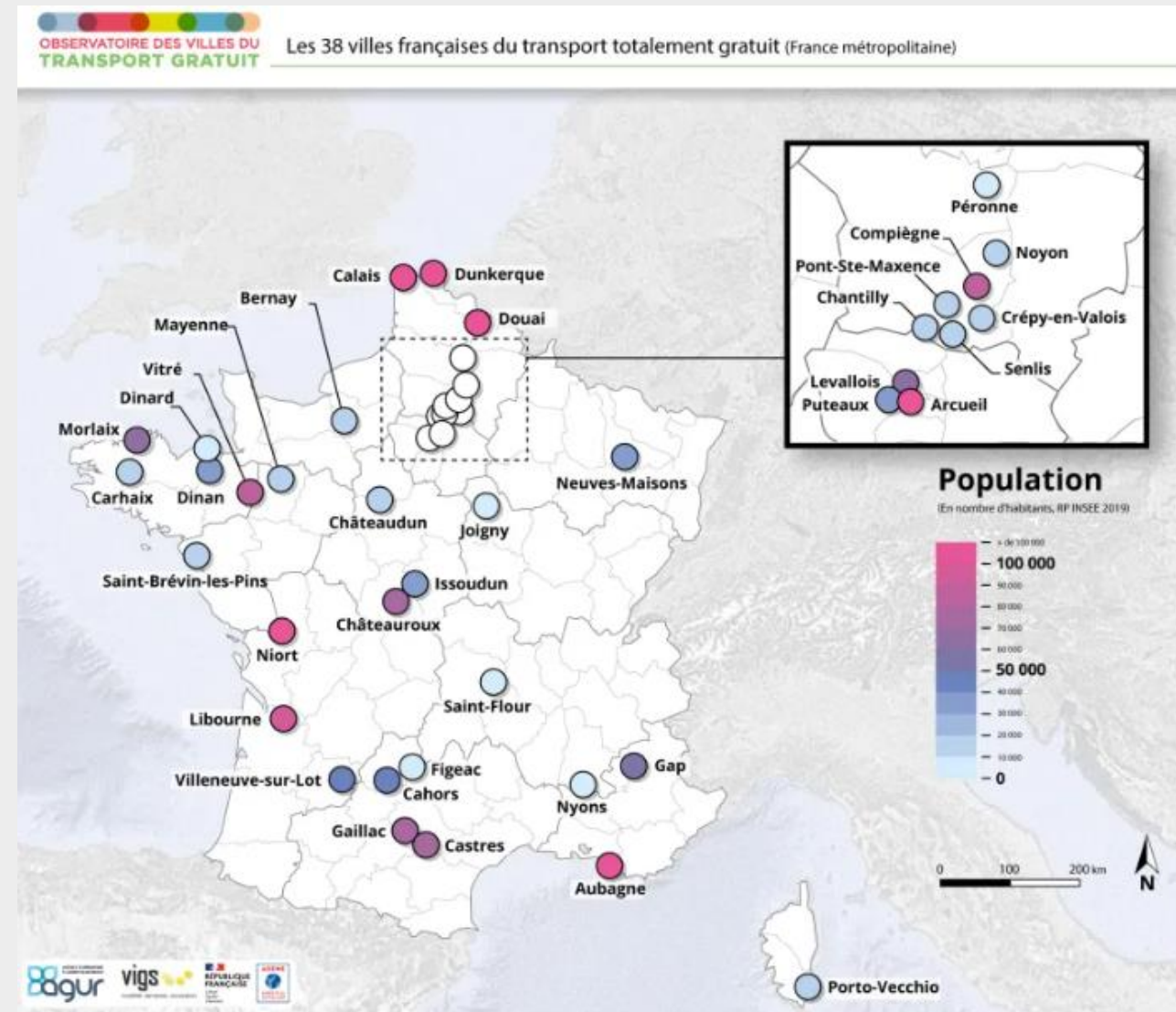
Modality

# • FFPT in Poland



Source: Štraub, Kębtowski & Maciejewska, 2023

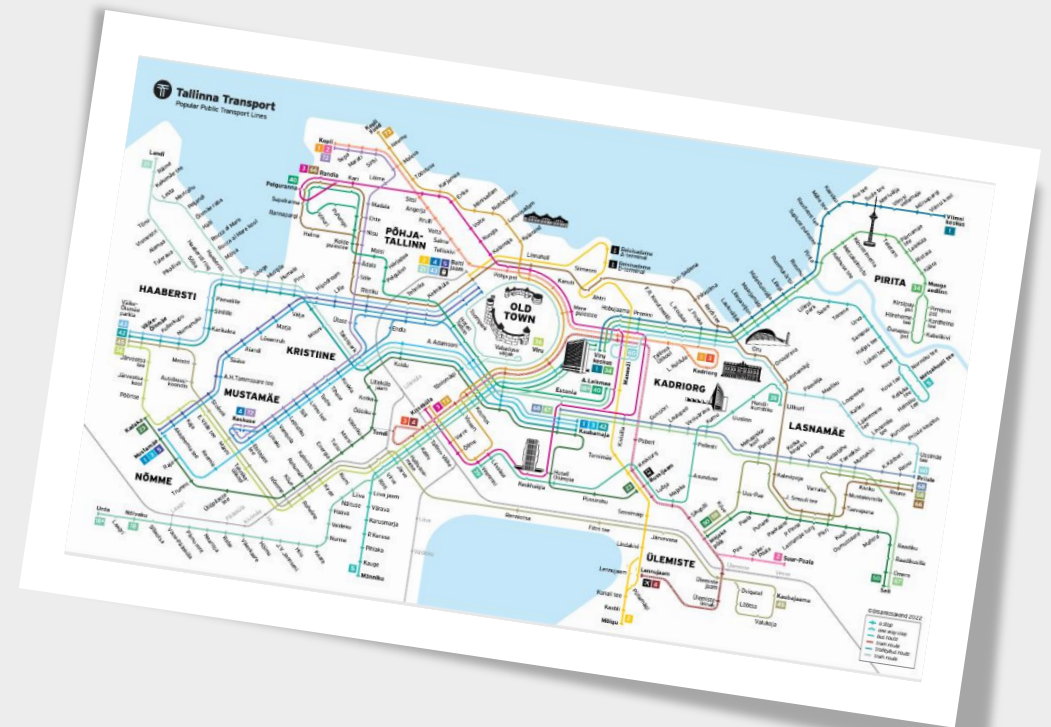
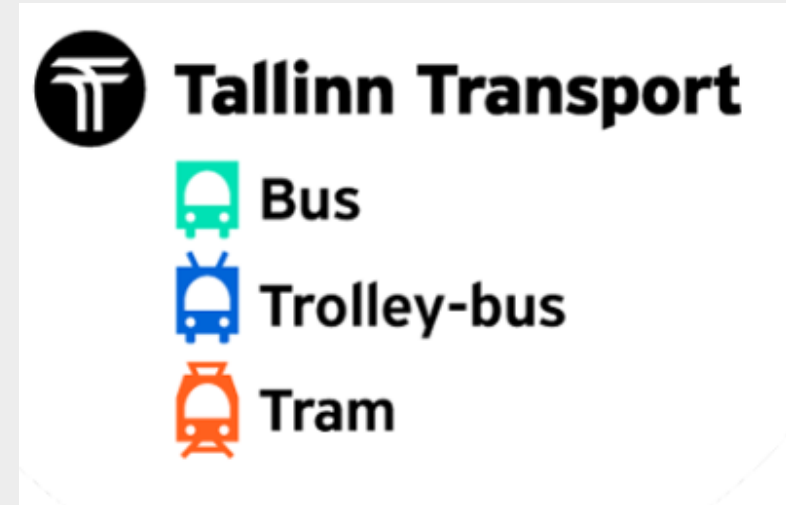
# • FFPT in France



Source: Observatoire des villes du transport gratuit, 2022

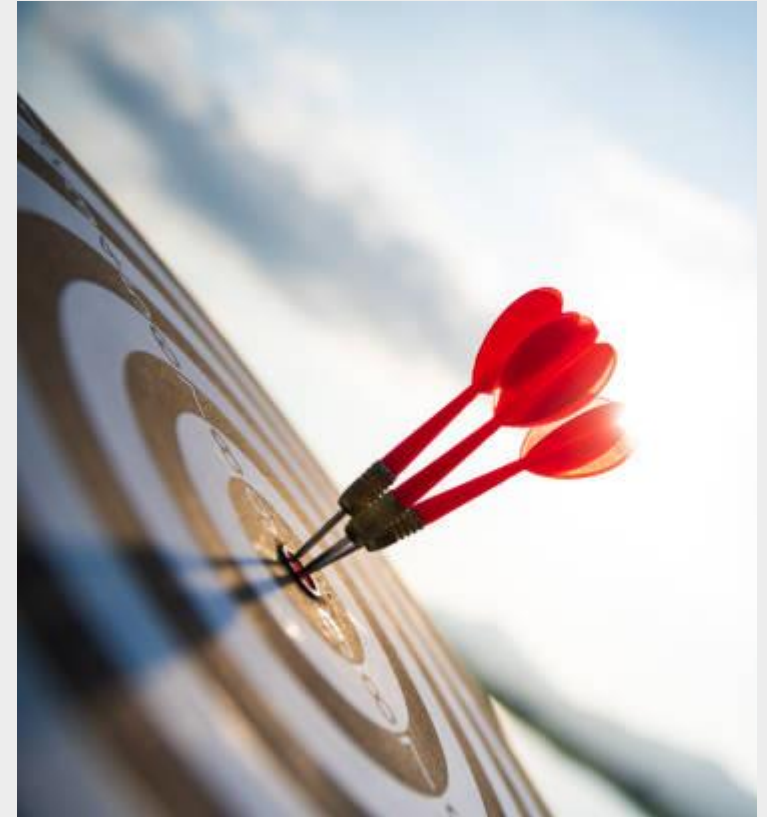
# Example - Tallinn

- Since 2013
- Ca. 400.000 inhabitants
- FFPT limited to residents
- Ticketing and residents' card system
- Various means of PT
- Particular context: many residents were not registered
- Funding: taxes



# MOTIVATION - EXPECTATIONS

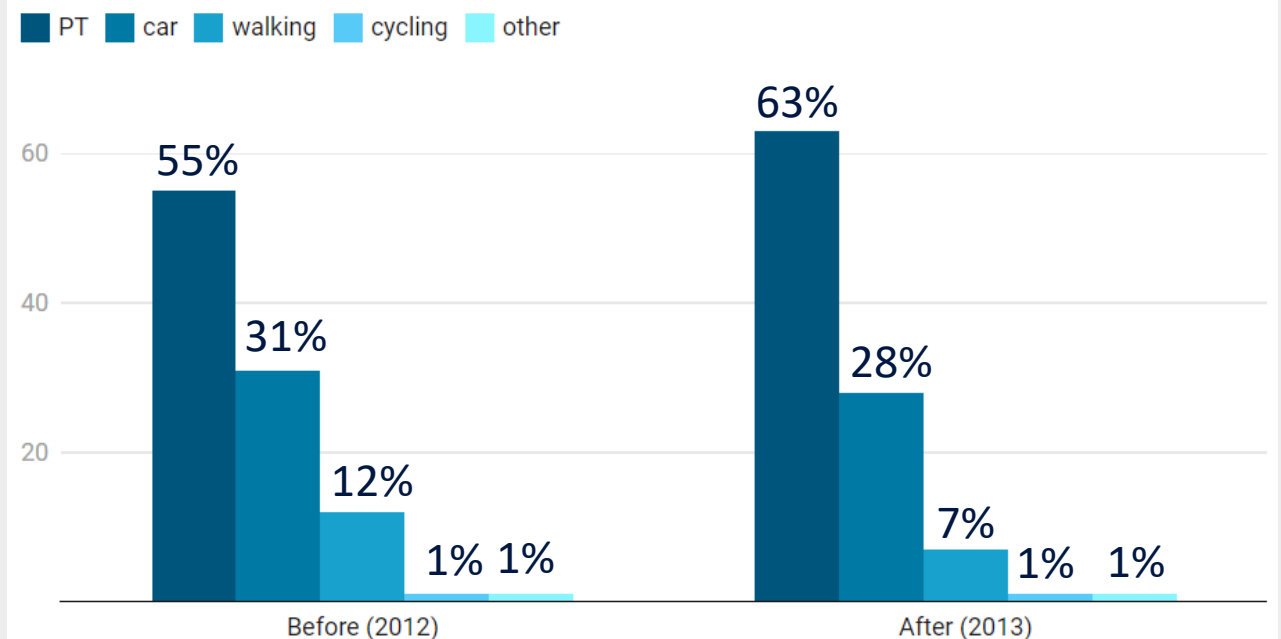
- To reduce air pollution – changing modal split
- To reduce traffic jams
- To increment the publicness of PT
- To help under-privileged social groups
- To improve social access to PT
- To improve the quality of life of local popularion
- To gain political support from local voters



# IMPACT – what do we know?

- Environmental impact
  - FFPT may have an impact (albeit limited) on the modal shift from cars to PT
  - Limited contribution to transport decarbonization

Modal split before (2012) and after (2013) FFPT implementation in Tallinn



Adapted from Cats et al., 2017

# IMPACT – what do we know?

- Financial impact
  - Highly context-dependent
    - Additional income generator (Tallinn)
    - Cheaper than ticketing system - simple PT networks
    - Small additional cost – from low fares to no fares
  - Usually covered by local budget





# IMPACT – what do we know?

- Impact on operations
  - Higher demand – higher ridership
  - No evidence of lower quality service
    - FFPT frequently goes along with other interventions to improve PT
  - Little evidence of FFPT-related vandalism and insecurity



# IMPACT – what do we know?

- Social impact
  - Meets invisible demand
  - Improves accessibility to PT and to opportunities
  - Mitigates inequalities and social exclusion
  - Rewards desired modal choice



# PROBLEMS

- Lack of data
  - No cost-profit analysis
  - Conclusions drawn from general feelings
- The difficulty in estimating the impact of this particular policy
- Not immune to electoral agendas
  - Can be played to gain political support
  - Blind, not evidence-based decision

