

# TeMA

Journal of  
Land Use, Mobility and Environment

The characteristics of urban travel behaviors and the attitudes of passengers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is less-studied. There is a considerable knowledge gap about the circumstances of how people think and decide about their short-term, medium-term, and long-term mobility for commute and non-commute travels.

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## URBAN TRAVEL BEHAVIOR IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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Cover Image by Houshmand E. Masoumi of landscape in Teheran

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## EDITORIAL PREFACE

### Special Issue 1.2018

### Urban Travel Behavior in the Middle East and North Africa

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This Special Issue the TeMA Journal of Land Use, Mobility and Environment focuses on an already researched subject of urban travel behavior and decisions in the less-studied geographical context of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). There is a large knowledge gap concerning the circumstances of urban mobility decision-making within the socio-cultural context of the MENA region and the differences in people's preferences and approaches toward transport compared to other regions of the world. A relatively large body of literature has been produced about the topic in the international context during the past three decades, but the literature is limited to primarily high-income countries. As a result, the sub-topics being discussed today have become quite narrow in focus. However, most of the countries located in the MENA region are in need of more general studies clarifying the main human-related aspects of urban mobility in order to provide local urban transportation planning norms and thereby achieve more sustainable transport modes. This lack of knowledge is the reason behind the publication of this special issue. In this issue, the geographical borders of the MENA region issue encompass the widely accepted area of Iran in the east to Morocco in the west. Turkey has not been included in some MENA definitions previously, and Pakistan has been excluded in most of them. Nevertheless, due to strong socio-cultural and religious relations, they have been included in this issue.

So far, a limited number of studies have addressed urban travel behavior and people's mobility preferences and decisions in conjunction with the socio-economics, land use, and human activities in the region. There have been studies undertaken in Egypt (El-Bany et al., 2014; El-Dorghamy & Mosa, 2016), Jordan (Hamed & Olaywah, 2000; Shbeeb & Awad, 2013), Iran (Ahmadi Azari et al., 2012; Babakan et al., 2018; Etminani-Ghasrodashti & Ardeshtiri, 2015, 2016; Hatamzadeh et al., 2017b, 2017a; Masoumi, 2013, 2014, 2015; Mehdizadeh et al., 2016, 2017; Rezasoltani et al., 2015; Shahangian et al., 2012; Soltani, 2017; Soltani & Shams, 2017; Soltanzadeh & Masoumi, 2014), Lebanon (Chalak et al. 2016; Danaf et al., 2014), Saudi Arabia (Al-Atawi, 2016; Al-Atawi & Saleh, 2014; Alotaibi, 2017), United Arab Emirates (Abulibdeh, 2017), Turkey (Gokasar & Gunay, 2017; Ozbil et al., 2016), and Pakistan (Gul et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the amount of studies, their subject coverage, and research quality are not entirely satisfying. Moreover, due to the limited number of studies on each sub-topic, little to no consistency or decisive results have been generated. Overall, this research output still does not seem sufficient for policy-making on national or local levels. Thus, more in-depth studies using primary and/or secondary data are needed.

As noted in the above paragraph, most of the published results have been generated since 2012 onwards, indicating the novelty and recentness of the studies and indirectly implying the need for more studies covering a wider range of sub-topics. In the meantime, the precision, accuracy, and comprehensiveness of the studies are still far from satisfactory.

In response to the above needs, this issue is aligned with the following research topics:

- Interconnections of people's urban transport preferences and needs with urban growth and housing;
- Relations between urban travel behavior and socio-economics, demographics, and culture;
- Modeling and forecasting of future urban mobility trends and needs;
- Human perceptions about urban transportation;
- Walkability and urban land use on the micro scale.

The issue starts with a paper from Delatte et al. describing passengers' needs regarding public transportation in Casablanca, Algiers, Amman, Beirut, and Muscat. This study has a good geographical coverage, including cities from the westernmost reaches of the region through to the east in Oman. The current status of public transit use in the five cities is presented in the manuscript by means of data collected from 984 respondents and 49 women in focus groups. A paper on Saudi Arabia by Errigo and Tesoriere on urban travel behavior determinants in the cities of Riyadh (the capital), Dammam, and Buraydah highlights the connection between travel behavior, the national economy, and social issues, and suggests that the Saudi urban development strategy change urban form in order to reduce car dependency. Similarly, Ceylan et al. focus on socio-economic and demographic determinants and indicators of car ownership in Turkey. According to their forecasting based on scenarios related to Gross Domestic Production and gasoline price, they predict that the car ownership rate in Turkey will be between 230 and 325 vehicles per one thousand inhabitants depending on economic achievements, global oil prices, and national taxation policies. Despite this projected growth, the figure will still be smaller than the major European Union countries. In a paper representing North Africa, Baouni et al. use the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey of Algiers (2014) to investigate the socio-economic variables and urban travel patterns behind customer satisfaction with the city's new collective transit systems like the new tramway and underground heavy rail system. Adeel examines the variation between urban and rural mobility characteristics such as travel length/time, trip frequency, etc. targeting individual and household socio-economic variables. The paper's analysis of the 2007 Pakistani national survey data finds that the built and social/cultural environments are important in determining travel mode choices, especially for women. Finally, Soltani et al. attempt to produce a walkability audit tool based on environmental measures of walking behaviors in a neighborhood of Shiraz, Iran. They found 50 environmental measures to be reliable and meaningful factors when included in the audit tool.

The papers of this issue investigate travel behaviors in cities from Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. The authors are based in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Oman, Italy, Australia, and the UK. The referees of this issue are researchers and experts located in Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Australia, France, and the UK.

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